The affective regimes of digital discourse: A multimodal, multilingual study of language, media and gender ideologies

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PREFACE

This thesis was undertaken as part of a larger inter-university project "What's up, Switzerland? Language, Individuals, and Ideologies in Mobile Messaging", which was funded by the Swiss National Foundation and took place between January 2016 and December 2018 (CRSII1-160714). The principal investigator of this Sinergia research was Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Stark at the University of Zurich. [1] The project consisted of four sub-projects investigating different aspects of digital communication. My thesis was specifically aligned with sub-project D, "The Cultural Discourses and Social Meanings of Mobile Communication", directed by Prof. Dr. Crispin Thurlow at the University of Bern. Sub-project D was designed to investigate language *about* mobile communication and shed light on deep-seated media and language ideologies. [2] A core feature of this sub-project was the creation of an online repository of news reports about digital language and communication (The *Digital Discourse Database)*, to be used by researchers engaged in digital discourse studies [3].

ABSTRACT

Digial discourse is frequently framed in a technologically deterministic way that leads to a discourse of "moral panic" where digital language and digital media are held responsible for a variety of societal ills (e.g. Thurlow 2006, 2007, 2014; Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Vickery, 2017). Very often, these discourses of moral panic target young people, and girls in particular. As Thurlow et al. (2019, p.14) argue, digital discourse is often framed around assumptions related to gender and age, but also related to race and class. This can be seen for example in two recent news media examples taken from the BBC (UK) and 20 Minutes (France). [4] The first is a lead from a BBC news story and focuses on "young people": *A social-media "trend" is leaving young people with genuine mental health problems "facing unfair and distressing criticism", private-school leaders say*. The second is a headline from the French news website 20 Mintutes and targets "girls": *Les filles qui passent du temps sur les réseaux sociaux sont plus sujettes à la depression* (girls who spend time on social media are more likely to be depressed). I situate the current thesis against the backdrop of such ideologically-charged news discourses. I am particularly concerned with metadiscursive comments related to media ideologies (Gershon, 2010c), or people's beliefs about the different media they use, these media effects on users, as well as the ways in which users' beliefs are shaped by deep-seated social and cultural ideologies such as those concerning gender. By examining the "cultural discourses" (i.e. public discourses) and "social meanings" (i.e. embedded practices) of digital media from a multimodal and a multilingual perspective, my research offers new perspectives into the field of digital discourse studies (e.g. Thurlow, 2018). In order to critically examine digital practices and the ideologies attached to them, I use a combination of approaches that fall into the broader framework of "multimodal critical discourse analysis" (cf. Machin, 2013). My thesis is organized around five chapters that investigate examples from the press (i.e. cultural discourses) and from actual

users (i.e. social meanings) in order to reveal the interplay between language ideologies, media ideologies, and gender ideologies. In the end, I show the "affective" connection between the news media's ideologies and the audience's responses to the media's ideologies. As Grossberg (1992, p.82-83) phrases it, "affect is the missing term in an adequate understanding of ideology". Ultimately, I discuss the *nuance* in the moral panic discourses revealed in the press and among users, as users themselves also challenge what they hear and see in the news. Although many discourses are imbued with a sentiment of fear and anxiety, the "affective regimes" (cf. Wee, 2016) of digital discourse are more subtle.

Keywords: digital discourse, gender ideologies, media ideologies, language ideologies, multimodal critical discourse analysis, news media

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I must also thank Gabriel Design who helped design the Digital Discourse Database (DDD), a core feature of this research project, our research assistant, Sabrina Subašić, for her help in archiving German-language and English-language news articles into the DDD, and Eva Rau, for her help in identifying German-language data through the DDD and Antconc.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Framing language, media, and gender ideologies

Theoretical framework

> "[M]oral panics have become the way in which daily events are brought to the attention of the public. They are a standard response, a familiar, sometimes weary, even ridiculous rhetoric rather than an exceptional emergency intervention. Used by politicians to orchestrate consent, by business to promote sales in certain niche markets, and by media to make home and social affairs newsworthy, moral panics are constructed on a daily basis." (McRobbie & Thornton, 1995, p.560)

Extract 1.1

"Depression in girls linked to higher use of social media"
"Research suggests link between social media and depressive symptoms was stronger for girls compared with boys"
(Headline and sub-head from the newspaper *The Guardian*, UK, 4 January 2019)

A recent news story from the British newspaper *The Guardian* (quoted above in Extract 1.1) serves as the perfect example of how the news media problematically frames girls' digital media practices. As Thurlow (2017, p.17) demonstrates, news media discourse often portrays women and girls' digital media use and practices in a reductionist mannner that emphasizes women's vulnerability, which is what the above headline from *The Guardian* and its sub-head illustrate. They serve to create a sense of "moral panic", which McRobbie & Thornton (quoted above) define as "a standard response, a familiar, sometimes weary, even ridiculous rhetoric" which the media uses

"to make home and social affairs newsworthy" (p.560). McRobbie & Thornton emphasize the everydayness of moral panic discourses, which circulate across many different domains and among many different groups of people. It is specifically the "everyday" quality of moral panic discourse that draws my interest, as in this thesis I investigate how different kinds of moral panic discourses regarding *digital communication* circulate on a daily basis, through news media discourse and in everyday conversations. Another crucial point that McRobbie & Thornton's quote highlights is the fact that moral panic discourses are "constructed". This implies that they are socially and culturally shaped, and also that people themselves can challenge such discourses and (re)negotiate meaning, as recent "moral panic" research demonstrates (e.g. Critcher, 2008; McRobbie & Thornton, 1995). As I explain throughout this thesis, new perspectives on moral panic take into account the plurality of voices and the role of the audience in the constant (re)negotiation and (re)construction of fear-mongering discourses.

In the current thesis, I investigate the everyday circulation of moral panic discourses concerning new/digital media, and the language ideologies, media ideologies, and gender ideologies associated with them. More specifically, I explore different aspects of *new* media, or as Ilana Gershon (2017, p.15) suggests, how people (i.e. the news media and the audience in this case) understand the use and practices of specific communicative channels in the creation of *new* "social practices". I thus focus on *new* media in Gershon's sense, but I specifically investigate *digital* media and communication in digital environments. In fact, digital technologies are not seen as "new" anymore, which is why the focus should rather be on what is new about their context of use and their socio-cultural impact (Flew, 2014; Tannen & Trester, 2013). In the same vein, Lievrouw & Livingstone (2006) propose analyzing new media by taking into account three specific components: the material aspect of the technology itself, the use/activity of the technology, *and* the social shaping of the technology. Here, I use the terms *new media* and *digital media* interchangeably although they highlight different aspects of a technology. *New media* emphasizes the newness of what a certain technology allows, and *digital media* focuses on the way that information is

transmitted (see Deumert, 2014 for an overview of different terms used). I do not use the term *CMC,* which puts an emphasis on the medium used. As Thurlow (2018, p.136) suggests, terminology and labeling can sometimes be confusing in the field of digital discourse studies. Nevertheless, the terms one uses shed light on crucial theoretical concepts. In this thesis, I most often use the term "digital media" since I am referring to any digitally-mediated form of communication.

As I explore people's "digital practices", I investigate what Jones et al. (2015, p. 3) call "'assemblages' of actions involving tools associated with digital technologies, which have come to be recognized by specific groups of people as ways of attaining particular social goals, enacting particular social identities, and reproducing particular sets of social relationships". In other words, I expand on previous work done in the field of digital discourse studies as I monitor how digital technologies continue to enable new forms of communication, new relationships, and new "social practices" (cf. Gershon, 2017). Burgess et al. (2018a, p.1) claim that we are living in a "social media paradigm" dominated by social media technologies that "facilitate communication and collaboration by users". Although they favor the term "social media" over "new media" (outdated) and "digital media" (too broad), I aim to investigate the "newness" of digital media in Gershon's sense. Digital media (and the "newness" of these media) are rapidly evolving and changing, and so are the social practices of which they are a part. In order to better understand digital media, it is essential to look at how they work and how people use and understand them at different moments in time. To do so, I take into account different theoretical perspectives within digital discourse studies. Although I do not investigate the language *of/in* digital media per se, or the "micro-level linguistic practices" (Thurlow et al., 2019, p.3), I rely on the latest digital discourse studies (e.g. Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015; Seargeant & Tagg, 2014; Thurlow, 2018) in order to better understand how people talk about the language of/in digital media, or the "macro-level socio-cultural processes" (Thurlow et al., 2019, p.3). Very often, discourses about digital media target young people, and girls in particular. As Thurlow et al. (2019, p.14) argue, discourses about

(young) people's digital media use and practices are inherently gendered, raced, and classed. In this thesis, I mainly address the *gendered* aspect of digital media, and attempt to provide a better understanding of what people believe to be the relationship between women and digital media. While there certainly is a "feminist uptake of digital communication" that attempts to counter sexism and patriarchy (Mendes et al., 2018, p.237), the media's portrayal of women's relationship with digital media does not necessarily align with this new trend of resistance.

While investigating various discourses *about* digital media I try to keep in mind what Spilioti (2015, p.134) states:

> Investigating the ways in which digital media and language use are talked about, understood and valued is important because it opens up a window into the very ways in which symbolic meanings are assigned to language and digital communication at particular moments in history

Discourses about digital media and digital communication are key evidence of our society's concerns, fears, and beliefs, and as such, they reveal much about the ways in which people function, and how they value language, communication, and technologies at a certain time and place (Spilioti, 2015, p.134). Moreover, the "cultural discourses" (i.e. public discourses) and "social meanings" (i.e. embedded practices) surrounding digital communication reflect not only key concerns that people have within a specific socio-historical context, "they can impact upon the development and integration of digital technologies in people's everyday lives" (Spilioti, 2015, p.134; see also Sturken & Thomas, 2004, p.3). In this thesis, I thus explore ideologies about digital media from a multilingual and multinational perspective, in order to gain a better understanding of digital media practices and their impact on users. In an age when digital media are used to regulate various domains of our daily lives (e.g. to break up, organize protests, condemn discrimination, spread political ideas, etc.), it is essential to attend to the sociocultural impact of such technologies, which is the goal of this thesis.

I now delineate the major theories and concepts that frame my research, from (digital) discourse studies in general to more specific language, media, and gender ideologies, and metadiscourse studies.

(Digital) discourse studies

> …discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.258)

I closely follow Fairclough and Wodak's definition of discourse as "social practice". Although "discourse" can be defined as language beyond the level of the sentence, language in use, and language related to social order and social practice, contemporary discourse scholars favor a more social approach and thus focus on the third definition; they investigate processes beyond language in use (see Cameron & Panovic, 2014; Tannen et al, 2015; and Jaworski & Coupland, 2014 for thorough overviews of discourse studies). In other words, they examine the role that language and other semiotic modes play in the shaping of social life, thus considering discourse as a form of social practice. Consequently, discourse studies are not the sole concern of linguists; scholars who situate themselves within a social, cultural, philosophical, or psychological field – among others – also explore the interplay between language and society (Jaworski & Coupland, 2014, p.3). In this regard, discourse studies examine how people make sense of their environment and how they interpret their social and cultural world. Discourse analysts explore how people classify and interpret certain concepts since "the building of knowledge and interpretation is largely a process of defining boundaries between conceptual classes, and of labeling those classes and the relationships between them" (Jaworski & Coupland, 2014, p.3). Such an approach is critical in the sense that discourse scholars do not just describe language; indeed, they deconstruct people's social practices in order to uncover power relationships and issues of inequality. As such, "[a]ny social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p.2). [5]

Part of the field of discourse studies, *digital discourse* scholarship also attempts to shed light on broader socio-cultural processes and on the role of language in the shaping of social life. This is why, Thurlow (2018) argues, "discourse" is one of the core organizing principles of digital

discourse studies (see also Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). Before taking into account the relevance of "discourse", research in digital discourse started in the 1990s with studies that examined the linguistic and formal features related to computer-mediated communication (CMC). The so-called "first wave" of digital discourse research was more medium-related than user-related, and because of its focus on the medium, early research unintentionally implied a deterministic relationship between the digital medium and the language used, as Squires (2010, p.462) explains. Susan Herring (e.g. 1996) greatly influenced digital discourse research by giving the field its foundational concepts. Herring & Androutsopoulos's (2015) overview of computer-mediated discourse (CMD) divided the field into six areas of research: the nature of CMD (e.g. modality, genres), discourse structure (e.g. typography, syntax), meaning (e.g. through words, emoticons, intertextuality), interaction (e.g. turn-taking norms), social practice (e.g. sociolinguistic variation, interaction and identity) and multimodal CMD (e.g. emojis, GIFs, videos). However, as Thurlow (2018) and Georgakopoulou & Spilioti (2015) argue, digital discourse scholars have tried to shift their concern towards a more socially (and sociolinguistic) oriented approach that focuses less on the digital medium and the linguistic forms of CMC. Digital discourse scholarship has thus moved towards a perspective "that no longer shies away from cross-fertilizations with social theory; that has embraced interactional approaches and is much less wary of '*discourse*' [my emphasis]" (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p.548). Therefore, the latest digital discourse research acknowledges the fact that communication is always contextualized and dependent on a wide range of factors such as identity, relationships, groups/communities, and context. The most recent theoretical approach corresponds with the so-called "third wave" of digital communication research, where "critical approaches to discourses and ideologies of digital communication are rapidly becoming focal concerns" (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti 2015, p.5). Therefore, the latest research in digital discourse studies (e.g. Androutsopoulous, 2011; Burgess et al., 2018b; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti 2015; Sargent & Tagg, 2014; Thurlow, 2018; Thurlow and Mroczek, 2011) is more socially oriented and allows scholars to shed light on issues related to the "social meanings" or "embedded practices" of

digital communication and social media, and to better understand language and connected media ideologies.

The second 'core principle' of current digital discourse studies, as outlined by Thurlow (2018; see also Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011) is "multimodality". [6] Multimodality draws on the tradition of "social semiotics", which allows for the study of "the semiotic potential of a given semiotic resource" and for exploring "how that resource has been, is, and can be used for purposes of communication" (van Leeuwen, 2005, p.5). In the study of visual design, one explores visual resources that perform a particular sort of semiotic work, or metafunction (cf. Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p.140). Importantly, digital discourse studies are increasingly taking into account other modes of communication (e.g. visual, auditory, and embodied engagement) in addition to written and spoken language (e.g. Jewitt, 2015; Keating, 2015). Thurlow et al. (2019) suggest two ways in which scholars might address multimodality in the field of digital discourse. First, researchers might investigate the visual resources used in digitally mediated communication, such as emojis, GIFs, or videos (e.g. Androutsopoulos & Tereick, 2015; Dürscheid & Siever, 2017), and others might rather focus on the ways in which digital discourse is visually represented in different media (e.g. Thurlow, 2017; Thurlow et al., 2019); the latter is the perspective which I follow.

The third 'core principle' that Thurlow (2018) outlines is "ideology", or the relationship between language and macro-level systems of beliefs. With regards to the ideological nature of digital media and digital communication, Spilioti (2016, p.133) states:

> The study of language use in digital communication cannot shy away from the wider social, cultural and historical discourses about digital media that interplay with the micro-level stylistic, textual and interactional practices of everyday users

Spilioti reminds us that both micro-level linguistic issues and macro-level ideological matters are interconnected. Since I will delve into the concept of "ideology" in more detail in the following section, I now simply propose to consider Thurlow's (2018) perspective in order to understand the relationship between both. Thurlow (2018) suggests two ways in which digital media scholars might investigate the relationship between language and ideology. The first approach centers on the ways in which our linguistic and communicative practices constitute our ideological system,

and the second approach explores the ways in which ideologies shape our communicative practices (Thurlow, 2018, p.138). Consequently, communicative practices are related to small-d-discourse, and language ideologies are related to discursive practices known as big-D Discourses (Gee, 2011). D-discourses are representations of broader social and cultural communicative and representational practices reproduced within powerful organizations (Spilioti, 2015). According to Gee (2011, p.30), D Discourse "is a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being". People speak, act, and create different identities in different contexts, and classify things in distinctive categories according to "norms". In doing so, they create relations of power and inequality through their use of language, actions, and values, employing "discourse" as a form of social action. People act and create links between linguistic forms (small-d discourse) and social phenomena (big-D Discourse) within specific ideological frameworks. These links are rarely questioned and become naturalized in their performance. Indeed, ideological relationships do not just "exist" devoid of any context; they can only become "real" in practice. I would now like to turn to the next section where I explore the concept of "ideology" in greater detail by looking at three kinds of ideologies: language (and semiotic) ideologies, media ideologies, and gender ideologies (gender ideologies are part of broader cultural/social ideologies).

Ideology

Language (and semiotic) ideologies

Ideologies are "any constellation of fundamental or commonsensical, and often normative, ideas and attitudes related to some aspect(s) of social 'reality'" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998, p.25). Language ideologies – beliefs, attitudes, conceptualizations about language practices – are interconnected with broader moral, political, and cultural interests (Irvine, 1989; Kroskrity, 2004; Silverstein, 1979; Woolard, 1998). Although there is no set methodology for examining language ideologies (Coupland & Jaworski, 2004, p.37), Irvine and Gal (2000) propose a framework which is useful for understanding the interplay between linguistic features and broader socio-cultural processes, where certain linguistic forms index group identities. By interpreting relationships

between language and social identities, people create linguistic ideologies. Irvine and Gal (2000) suggest three semiotic processes that people use to explain linguistic differences: "fractal recursivity", "iconization", and "erasure". "Fractal recursivity" involves the reproduction of opposition at different levels. For example, certain ideologies can be "applied to further groups or activities" (Androutsopoulos, 2010, p. 184). Androutsopoulos (2010) uses fractal recursivity to explain the meaning of linguistic difference between standard German and ethnolects. If there is opposition between linguistic varieties (i.e. standard German and ethnolect), the dichotomy will recur at another level (i.e. between people). If standard German is seen as the norm and an ethnolect as a deviant form, the same opposition will be applied to both social groups. As a result, the ethnolect is the language of "problem youth" and standard German is "normal German reality" (Androutsopoulos, 2010, p.198). The next step in constructing language ideologies is "iconization", a process which involves associating a linguistic form with a particular social group, thus making the linguistic feature an essence of the group. Although Thurlow's (2014) study examines all three ideological processes (i.e. erasure, iconization, and recursivity), here I only discuss Thurlow's perspective on "iconization". Thurlow (2014, p.489) discusses the case of "mock texting" which focuses on the supposed unintelligibility of young people's digital language. The author argues that metadiscursive comments in the press related to young people's texting habits are "simplified caricatures and bear little resemblance to the kinds of messages most young people send" (Thurlow, 2014, p.489); therefore, he claims that text message language is commonly seen as an icon of young people. Finally, "erasure" is an ideological practice which removes anything that does not align with a specific belief in order to maintain iconic distinctions. For example, Squires (2011) demonstrates how the media removes adult text message practices from their news reports because this does not fit with their "digital nativist" ideology. In his recent study of the news media's representation of "sexting" (a particular type of digital discourse), Thurlow (2017) also applies Irvine and Gal's (2000) framework and demonstrates how sexting is understood as a typical youth phenomenon (cf. iconization), how actual users' relationships are not mentioned (cf.

erasure), and how individual practices are displaced to a whole generation of young people (cf. recursivity). Consequently, Irvine and Gal's (2000) framework is an excellent analytical tool to determine to what extent the language we use – through the use of the three semiotic processes – feeds our beliefs and ideologies regarding digital discourse. Similarly, multiple studies (e.g. in Jaworski et al., 2004; Johnson & Ensslin, 2007; Milani & Johnson, 2010) explore the concept of language representation as part of language ideologies. They investigate the social and cultural processes that affect linguistic forms, and the links between forms of talk and broader categories such as people's identity and relationships. In this regard, an ideology functions as a system of representation, "a structured pattern of semiotic resources, which misrecognizes what is merely arbitrary, and re-signifies it as intrinsically natural, logical and morally good" (Milani 2007, p.114). Therefore, ideologies about (digital) language also reflect deep-seated beliefs about how meaning is made and how communication functions; they are reflective of deeper "semiotic ideologies". Semiotic ideologies are "basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world" (Keane 2003, p.419; see also Thurlow, 2017, and Parmentier, 1994 for the first reference of semiotic ideology). Keane (2003) developed the concept of "semiotic ideology" while exploring the status of material things; more precisely, his essay is a call for the use of other modes (besides language) to approach materiality in the world. As such, Thurlow (2017, p.15) proposes to look at the connection between semiotic ideologies and broader questions of multimodality, since semiotic ideologies involve ways of thinking about different modes as being better/worse than others. In the same vein, Thurlow (2017, p.15) claims that "the way we talk about meaning-making says a lot about whose ways of making meaning are considered better and whose beliefs about meaning-making are most powerful or influential". These are, Thurlow (2017, p.15) suggests, matters related to wider questions of "symbolic authority", or "representational economies" according to Keane (2003). Although both language ideologies and semiotic ideologies structure the social meanings of digital communication, Thurlow's (2017) study demonstrates how "media ideologies" (cf. Gershon, 2010c) are also interrelated with both language and semiotic ideologies. This leads

me to the next theoretical concept that I would like to examine, that of "media ideology".

Media ideologies

Within the field of digital discourse, a system of representation does not only reveal language and semiotic ideologies; indeed, when people discuss matters related to their digital communicative practices, they inevitably make allusions that are tied to their beliefs about different media, which are called "media ideologies" (Gershon, 2010c; see also Thurlow, 2017). Ilana Gershon (2010a) introduced the concept of "media ideologies" in her innovative study about young people's talk about breakups. She argued that people do not always agree on the definition of a "good" breakup and on what is (in)appropriate use of digital media, because they have different media ideologies. As such, "media ideologies are what people believe about how the medium affects or should affect the message" (Gershon, 2010b, p.391). Gershon (2010c) also recognizes that media ideologies are connected to language ideologies since they work in the same way. However, the focus on the material aspect of the technology is what distinguishes media ideologies from language ideologies. Discussing media ideologies inevitably forces us to consider questions of "materiality" (i.e. the physical properties of a given technology), "referentiality" (i.e. contextualization), "address" (i.e. audience identity), "remediation" (i.e. how beliefs about older media shape beliefs about newer media), and "newness" (i.e. how people think about the "newness" of new media) (see Gershon, 2010c for an introduction to these concepts, as well as Thurlow, 2017). [7] As I stated at the beginning of this introductory chapter, "newness" refers to the understanding of the use and practices of specific communicative channels in the creation of *new* "social practices". An important element of these new "social practices" concerns cultural and social ideologies that are tightly connected to digital media. For example, Thurlow et al. (2019, p.14) argue that digital communication is often framed as a youth, middle-class, white and urban phenomenon, which is also gendered as a female practice. Similarly, Thurlow (2017) investigates the ways in which "sexting" (as a digital practice) is linguistically and visually represented in news media discourse, and how metadiscourse about sexting often concerns women and girls. News media discourse

tends to portray women/girls as well as their digital media use and practices in reductionist and degrading ways, similar to the way women/girls have been represented in the media for years. This brings me to the next section where I discuss *gender* ideologies with regards to (digital) media.

Gender ideologies

Gender as a social construction

Before going any further, it is worth defining what I mean by "gender" and by other terms such as "sex" and "sexuality". In recent years, various social science scholars have detailed their concerns regarding the problematic definitions of these terms as well as misunderstandings and misconceptions about their meaning, which have led to much ambiguity and confusion (e.g. Cameron, 2010; Marwick, 2014; Mcelhinny, 2003; Pinto-Coelho & Mota-Ribeiro, 2016; Richardson, 2007). However, as Mcelhinny (2003, p. 36) and Pinto-Coelho & Mota-Ribeiro (2016, p.53) argue, conceptions and definitions of these terms are ideological. As such, struggles over the meaning of "gender", "sex" and "sexuality" "are also *over* language in the sense that having the power to determine which meanings are 'correct' is an important aspect of social and ideological power" (Pinto-Coelho & Mota-Ribeiro, 2016, p.53). Consequently, the perspective I offer concerning the terminology of such important concepts should also be viewed as ideological. Nevertheless, defining these terms allows for a better understanding of my thesis and what I attempt to demonstrate through my analyses.

As early as 1987, West and Zimmerman (1987) proposed looking at "sex" as a social construction, challenging the received ideas of the previous decades that viewed "sex" as a biological and fixed "given", while "gender" was seen as a cultural construction. Since then, scholars have been challenging the overly simplistic dualism that characterizes "sex", "gender", and "sexuality". The concept of "sexuality" has often been misunderstood in terms of a simplistic dichotomy between "heterosexual" and "homosexual". As Marwick (2014) explains, sexuality "is an individual expression and understanding of desire" (p.62), and does not necessarily follow these

two commonly-accepted binary categories. Therefore, post-structuralist sociolinguists have been deconstructing such presuppositions and have been following the approach of the social construction of "sex" in order to address the problematic framing of sex and gender (Mcelhinny, 2003). Importantly, as Mcelhinny (2003, p.24) claims, proponents of this approach do not merely investigate gender differences; rather, they "ask how and why gender differences are being constructed in that way, or what notion of gender is being normalized in such behavior".

In popular (and sometimes "expert") discourse, "gender" is often understood as being rooted in biological differences. For instance, Marwick (2014, p.61) explains that people tend to view both sex and gender differences based on biological differences; as a result, gender is a "social understanding of how sex should be experienced". However, gender results from sociocultural expectations and norms. In the same vein, Cameron (2010) discusses the upsurge of the "new biologism", a perspective that views differences between men and women as caused by biological differences – such a message can also be found in academic and scientific discourse. In her article, Cameron argues against the "new biologism" and what some scientific experts claim in order to prove that gender differences are *not* based on biological differences. Rather, Cameron favors a more social-constructionist approach to explain such differences.

Research in Media and Gender has been attempting to deconstruct gender representations and demonstrate how they function as "constructions" and how they do not always mirror reality (e.g. Carter, 2012; de Lauretis, 1987; Goffman, 1979; Hall, 1997; Ott & Mack, 2014). In this regard, gender is something we "do" or perform, but not something we "are" (cf. Butler, 1990). We can thus also *construct* our gender identities through our consumer behavior by seeing gender being performed around us (e.g. in the media) and by being taught how to perform the "right" gender (e.g. at school and at home). Children are socialized by their parents/caregivers, teachers, media institutions, and society at large to adopt the "correct" gender behavior: either a "female" or a "male" behavior. Consequently, there is pressure for children to conform to appropriate gender categories; and partly through the media's perpetuation of fixed and normalized gendered

representations, gender socialization continues. In the same vein, de Lauretis (1987, p.4) suggests that gender is "the representation of a relation, that of belonging to a class, a group, a category". These representations – products of the media or of "social technologies" (de Lauretis, 1987, p.2) – show media consumers how they should behave, perform, or act if they belong to a certain category. For instance, Mitra and Jones's study (2012) investigates gender roles in TV ads aimed at children. They show that children are aware of gender dichotomies in the ads they are being presented and of the "appropriate" behavior to adopt if they are a boy or a girl. For example, liking pink is not acceptable for a boy since this goes against perceived gender-appropriate behavior. When blurring the distinctions between sex and gender, the media creates and attempts to fix hegemonic definitions of patriarchy and provides a guide to "appropriate" and "natural" behavior that people should follow. However, if one considers gender differences as cultural constructions – as opposed to "given" and "natural" – this allows for the possibility of change. In this regard, such differences depend on socio-historical elements that evolve over time. For instance, Dennis (2012) notes that during the era of King Louis XIV in France, wearing a wig and lipstick was considered masculine. Therefore, as scholars suggest (e.g. Carter, 2012; Dennis, 2012; Lazar, 2000), gender meanings are never fixed and can differ across time, culture, race, and class. Similarly, as Gauntlett (2002, p.6) claims, "what we learned in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s about media and gender might not be so relevant today, because the media has changed, and people's attitudes have changed". Meanings tend to change; yet certain gender representations have been remarkably resilient over time because of the role of the media in trying to fix hegemonic definitions of masculinity.

Similarly, Language and Gender research followed the same evolution to show that differences between men and women's communication styles are not biological or natural. Research into language and gender exploded after the year 1975, when studies based on "difference" emerged, such as Robin Lakoff's (1975) groundbreaking work "Language and woman's place", which describes "women's language" and subsequent gender inequalities.

Linguistic research that focused on "difference" still dominated until the end of the twentieth century, and culminated with Deborah Tannen's (1990) work "You just don't understand", which became popular within non-academic audiences as well. In this era, the idea that men and women were naturally different was still quite common, and was used to help explain common misunderstandings between men and women (Cameron, 2006, p.136-137). However, as Cameron (2010, p.532-533) suggests, more recent studies have attempted to show, through empirical evidence, just how difficult it is to characterize women's language in uniform ways (e.g. the idea that women talk more than men or that women are more co-operative than men). Rather, recent scholarly work (e.g. Goodwin, 2006; Kotthoff, 2010; Wodak, 2015) shows that language is bound to historical and socio-cultural factors, and that it is thus subject to much variation. In other words, differences between men and women's communication styles are "statistical tendencies" (Cameron, 2006, p.145) and are influenced by sociocultural factors; they are not necessarily biological or natural.

Gender and/in media studies

As I said above, gender and media scholars explore the idea that gendered messages are cultural constructions which revolve around relationships of power in a masculine-dominant society. Although the media directs audiences towards "preferred" (i.e. hegemonic) meanings (cf. Hall, 1997), viewers and readers can still modify and reject the media's perspective. The media certainly plays a powerful role in influencing its audience in certain ways; however, the media alone cannot create meaning by itself. Prior to the 1970s, communication scholars viewed the interpretation of a message as linear, "based on the idea of the closed message transmitted between sender and receiver" (Thornham et al., 2009, p.10). However, during the "cultural turn" of the 1970s, Stuart Hall (1997) introduced a major shift in our conception of culture; he offered a definition of culture as "shared meanings", highlighting a social constructionist view of meaning produced and created in exchanges as opposed to the traditional belief that things have meaning in and of themselves

(see also Bell & Garrett, 1998; and Talbot, 2007). As such, Hall explores the ways in which meanings are exchanged in a "circuit of culture" while examining the relationship between a text's production and reception. According to this approach, meaning is constantly reworked and shaped through different relationships, in a dialogic way. As a result, for the first time, scholars have started to take into consideration the fact that the audience "might shape the future media output" and that one can investigate the production process by exploring the text and its reception (Thorham et al., 2009, p.10). According to Hall (1997, p.1), language – composed of signs and symbols such as sounds, words, and images – constructs meaning through a system of representation. These signs "are vehicles or media which *carry meaning* because they operate as *symbols,* which stand for or represent (i.e. symbolize) the meanings we wish to communicate" (Hall, 1997, p.5). Audiences resort to their own systems of representation to decode such texts. They make associations between people, objects, ideas etc. using a mental map and a specific language which enable them to make sense of the world (i.e. to represent the world) (Hall, 1997, p.17). Representation is at the heart of the "circuit of culture"; people interpret messages by creating links between certain concepts (e.g. between 'woman' and 'home'), and then they use language (images, words, etc.) to represent the concepts in their thoughts. Consequently, the "circuit of culture" recognizes the complex relationship between a text, its production and its reception, and the fact that exchanges occur in different places and contexts. This shows that media producers do not have total power in creating the meaning of a text.

Although readers or viewers of media texts assign meaning to certain things using their systems of representation, "interpretation is not infinitely open" (Carter, 2012, p. 374). Media messages are shaped according to dominant and hegemonic ideologies in society. In this way, the media exercises power in privileging one meaning over other possible ones, and the audience decodes this "alongside the ideological lines cued up in the text (and often also found in their own lives)" (Thornham et al., 2009, p.10). Furthermore, according to Hall (1997, p.228), in directing the audience towards a preferred meaning, the media tries to "fix" it and naturalize it. Their role

in this process is one that focuses on "otherness" or "difference". When talking about race and racial differences, Hall (1997) suggests that difference is necessary to meaning; more specifically, the author argues that "meaning depends on the difference between opposites" (p.234). Therefore, regarding sexual difference, men and women are often defined in contrast to one other. The definition of a man is based on what a woman is not, and the definition of a woman is based on what a man is not. With gender representations, the media tries to fix this biological difference with seemingly natural gender roles. Gender difference – which is based on but not synonymous with sexual difference – is thus naturalized. Very often, the media takes an essentialist view which enacts "an understanding of gender differences as innate and rooted in biological and psychological underpinnings" (Marwick, 2014, p.63). One of the processes that the media uses to fix hegemonic definitions of masculinity is stereotyping. Stereotypes are a means of reducing the complexity of the individual to a few simplistic characteristics, and in so doing, they fix and naturalize difference (Hall, 1997, p.258).

Gender representations in the media tend to be stereotypical. As Abel (2012) and Lazar (2014) suggest, society now assumes that gender inequality and sexism are issues of the past, which is a "post-feminist" perspective. There has been some progress regarding the media's representation of gender; women are not necessarily as underrepresented in the media as they once were, but the way that they are represented today still sexualizes, objectifies, and dehumanizes them (e.g. Carter and Steiner, 2004; Döring & Poeschl, 2006; Jia et al., 2016; Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016). For instance, Collins's (2011, p.290) review of two issues of the journal *Sex Roles* in 2010 and 2011 emphasizes the fact that women are still underrepresented in certain media and are still portrayed in a negative manner. Indeed, women tend to be depicted in traditional feminine roles (as housewives, mothers, wives, nonprofessionals) and as sexualized (partially clothed or nude) and subordinated objects. Moreover, although there seems to be a feeling of equality, inclusivity, and emancipation in the representation of women in the media (e.g. women represented in powerful positions and work-related places), such images are mere "playful

fantasies"; in others words "[they are] only a game to play", as Machin & Thornborrow (2003, p. 468) notice.

As a result of the establishment of a binary opposition between male and female roles, media discourse creates hegemonic definitions of patriarchy. If gender differences appear natural – which is the goal of the media's use of stereotypes – they become "beyond history, permanent and fixed" (Hall, 1997, p.245). Moreover, as Cameron (2006, p.144) states, "when difference is naturalized, inequality is institutionalized". The marking of difference automatically brings with it inequality; in the case of gender differences, "masculine" carries more power than "feminine". Indeed, as Derrida (1972) argues, binary oppositions such as feminine/masculine are rarely neutral; they emphasize relations of power with a dominant and a subordinated category. The media's role in sustaining relations of power is undeniable; in the case of gender relations, they favor a masculine or patriarchal ideology. In order to maintain power any ruling class must gain the public's consent, and the media can be a powerful tool used to achieve such a goal since it can construct definitions of what is appropriate behavior in what *appears* to be a mirror of reality. As I explained above, the media subtly directs its audience towards a preferred meaning that aligns with its values, and this way of encoding a message reproduces hegemonic definitions of a patriarchal society (Carter and Steiner, 2004, p.21). Consequently, the media's patriarchal ideology *reflects* dominant attitudes in society but does not actually mirror society, which aligns with Collins' (2011) argument that recent studies portray "a media world closer to the working-world reality of 1950 than to 2010 society" (p.292). There have been many social changes concerning the role and position of women in society, which the media often seem to ignore since they still portray men and women in traditional gender roles. As Lazar suggests, discourse is a "socio-historically contingent 'meaning-potential'" (2000, p.376). Thus, gender discourse cannot be fixed; it has the potential to be changed. But as the above examples regarding gender representations demonstrate, this proves to be a difficult and slow-moving process.

Feminism in new media studies

Although the press continues to frame the relationship between women/girls and digital media in unfavorable terms (see previous section), women have been taking an active "feminist" role with regards to new technologies – thus going against the traditional vision of technology as a "masculine" entity. [8] According to Wacjman (2010, p.144), technology is traditionally "thought of in terms of industrial machinery and military weapons, the tools of work and war, overlooking other technologies that affect most aspects of everyday life". In Western society, the use of technology by women has often been considered a "corruption of nature" (Ganito, 2010, p.79). However, with the advent of digital media, feminist research has become more optimistic with regard to the relationship between technology and women. As Wacjamn (2010, p.147) claims, "feminist approaches of the 1990s and today are positive about the possibilities of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to empower women and transform gender relations". In this view, Donna Haraway's (1985) *Cyborg Manifesto* is a pioneering (and provocative) literary work in which she describes how technology can empower women and change gender relations. Following her lead, other scholars have investigated the power of (digital) technologies in empowering women. Digital media are challenging and changing representations of gender in today's digital society. One characteristic of digital media that is particularly relevant for the challenging of gender norms is the fact that audiences can be both producers and consumers of digital media content. Participants still consume content, but they can also create it (e.g. social platforms such as YouTube, comment sections of online newspapers, blogs, etc.). Such a characteristic challenges the processes of message encoding and decoding as well as the notion of audience (Durham and Kellner, 2012, p.20). With the internet, the interactivity between producers and audiences has grown in significant ways (Talbot, 2007; Willett, 2008). As with the MeToo movement in 2017, there is now a trend of using digital media in order to challenge gender oppression (and other forms of oppression). Through digital feminism (e.g. the use of hashtags), women may raise their voices so as to produce change in society, which is in itself a form of empowerment (e.g. Chen et

al., 2018; Dixon, 2014; Keller et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2018; Thrift, 2014). Research (e.g. Baym & boyd, 2012; Willet, 2008) has also explored the role of online spaces in the construction of people's digital identity. In this regard, women can use social media as sites for conveying and contesting gender identities, as Halonen & Leppänen (2017) argue in their study of "pissis girls" in Finland. In their study, the authors show how young women "construct the category of so-called pissis girls – girls who are taken to embody a particular version of 'bad' young femininity in contemporary Finland" (Halonen & Leppänen, 2017, p.39). Although research investigates how digital spaces can play an important role in the negotiation and challenging of (gendered) identities, women and girls still face the pressure of having to present feminine and sexualized identities online (e.g. Barbovschi et al., 2017; Livingstone & Mason, 2015; Ringrose, 2011; Ringrose & Barajas, 2011). Nevertheless, as the above studies illustrate, digital/social media discourse is an arena under much scrutiny in the field of feminist media research, especially because of the political dimension of such research (e.g. the activist dimension of new media). While feminist activism is indeed a recent subject in feminist media scholarship, I now outline other important approaches to gender and new/digital media research.

While "first-wave" feminism mainly focused on issues prior to the 1950s, such as women's suffrage, "second-wave" feminism started in the 1960s and with it "began the systematic analysis of the media as sites of gender construction" (Ganito, 2010, p.78). Published in 1963, *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan marked the start of this "second-wave" feminist movement since it was the first to question the power of the media in defining gender roles (women's roles in particular). Another major milestone in feminist media research was Gaye Tuchman's (1978) description of women's exclusion in media contexts as "symbolic annihilation". With these publications followed many "representation" studies that investigated the role of the media in shaping gendered meanings and what it meant to be a woman. As Bachmann et al. (2018, p.2) emphasize, "Exploring, understanding, and challenging the implications of gender have been at the core of feminist media studies". However, the role of feminist media research goes further than

investigating patriarchal and hegemonic media messages and/or granting women certain rights. "Third-wave" feminist studies take into consideration the plurality and heterogeneous nature of women as opposed to a universal vision of women as victims of patriarchal oppression (e.g. Baxter, 2003; Mills, 2002; Wajcman, 2010). More recent research has started to focus on issues of differences between women. This view of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) is particularly important in feminist studies and "explains how people's subjectivities and experiences are defined through a set of complex interwoven identities based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, among other markers" (Bachmann et al., p.3). Furthermore, as van Zoonen (1994, p.27) highlights, in this new perspective from the 1990s, "meaning is no longer conceptualized as a more or less consistent entity, but is seen as contradictory, divided and plural, in other words as polysemic". As such, within "third-wave" research where meaning is viewed as plural, scholars take into account the social shaping of gender and technology. Thus, de Lauretis (1987, p.2) proposes looking at "technologies of gender", where gender can be shaped by various "social technologies" and "institutionalized discourses". In this view, gender should not be understood as strictly attached to sexual differences. In sum, what is particularly important in "third-wave" feminist perspectives is the desire to go beyond simplistic investigations of the media's distorted and stereotypical representations of women, and to consider the mutual shaping of gender and technology. In other words, gender should indeed be seen as being shaped by technology, but the effect of gender on technology should also be considered (Wajcman, 2010).

In "third-wave" feminist media studies, research investigates how "society is co-produced with technology" (Ganito, 2010, p. 79). For instance, Faulkner's study (2001) rejects the view of technology as being deterministically patriarchal (p.80). From a deterministic point of view, technology is seen as an extension of men's desire to control things which thus determines its masculine use. Rather, as in other feminist technology studies (Selwyn, 2007; van Doorn and van Zoonen, 2009), Faulkner sees technology as socially constructed: gender and technology mutually influence and shape each other (Faulkner, 2001, p.80). In this regard, the masculine characteristic

of technology should not be seen as given or unchanging, but rather as socially constructed (Faulkner, 2001, p.82). New technologies are not created in predetermined ways; there is flexibility in the meanings that a new technology can carry. Also, new creations can have unintended consequences. For example, although the telephone was not created for social purposes, it came to carry a feminine connotation because women used it as a social tool to communicate with at home (Lemish, 2007, p.512). Indeed, the telephone was first used for business purposes, and it was introduced in the domestic sphere because it was thought that "businessmen would find it useful to call other colleagues from the home" (Faulkner, 2001, p.84). However, the wives of these businessmen appropriated the phone by using it for their own social purposes. The telephone is thus a good illustration of technology as a social construct. Technology is not gendered by nature; it acquires a masculine or feminine connotation through the interaction between the actual use of the medium and other social processes (Lemish & Cohen, 2007, p.512). As a result, representations of technologies as masculine or feminine can change over time and carry different meanings.

I am particularly informed by studies that focus on the relationship between gender and digital media, such as smartphones. In the media (e.g. advertisements), women tend to be portrayed as the primary users of phones, and as such mobile phones are often gendered and seen as feminine objects (cf. Vickery, 2014). Furthermore, the gendered shaping of technology can also be seen in the design of mobile communication technologies; indeed, mobile phone companies often advertise their products to attract female users, and thus resort to gendered stereotypes (e.g. in mobile phones' features and accessories) (cf. Shade, 2007). Although mobile phones are not intrinsically gendered, they are gendered as feminine objects in order to match gender scripts. As such, Faulkner (2001, p.83) proposes two ways of understanding gendered technologies. The first one concerns "gendering by association"; for example, home appliances tend to be used by women; hence, they are considered "feminine". The second one concerns "gender in technology", where masculine or feminine features are embodied in the design of the technology. The author claims that most relationships are gendered by association (Faulkner, 2001, p.83). If most cultural

images of technology are considered masculine (Cotten and Tufekci, 2009; Faulkner, 2001; Lemish & Cohen, 2007), why are women and girls often seen as the primary users of phones? Answering this question "obliges us to view gender *as an integral part* of the social shaping of technology" in a constructivist approach where technology and society mutually shape each other (Faulkner, 2001, p.90). For example, when associating technology with women or men, one is led to make other gender distinctions such as "people-focused" (i.e. women) and "machine-focused" (i.e. men) (Faulkner, 2001, p.85). These gender dichotomies call to mind the popular stereotypes of women as being more empathetic, socially oriented, family-focused, cooperative and interested in the communicative function of new technologies than men (e.g. Faulkner, 2001; Chong et al., 2012; Mitra and Jones, 2012; see also Cameron, 2010). Hence, the portrayal of girls with digital media focuses on the "relational" aspect of technology. Moreover, studies about the gendering of mobile communication demonstrate that these stereotypes are still quite prevalent (Döring, 2006; Selwyn, 2007; Lemish, 2007) and that the "level and frequency of stereotyping in print advertisements seems to show no clear decrease" (Döring & Pöschl, 2006, p.174). For instance, the idea that women are mainly interested in social relations and the family is still ubiquitous and can help to explain the focus on this "relational aspect" in the portrayal of women with digital media. This is particularly interesting since many think of digital communication as non-gendered. The gendered representation of digital media is thus the product of popular associations that change over time, where gender and technology mutually shape each other. Since gender is a cultural construct, technology cannot be "masculine," even though the media (and other influences such as education) may try to make such gender roles seem natural. Therefore, the metadiscursive comments ones finds in the media are tightly connected to gender ideologies (and to language and media ideologies). In fact, "it is also through metalanguage that ideologies are formulated, reproduced and reinforced" (Galasinski, 2004, p.132). This brings me to the next and final theoretical section, which is about metadiscourse.

Metadiscourse

The way that lay people or public institutions talk *about* digital discourse is what is called *metadiscourse* (discourse about discourse, or metalanguage – language about language). The concept of metalanguage is particularly useful in understanding how people value certain forms of discourse and communication. When lay people comment on language and communication, they make judgments on how language/communication functions and how it should be used; they portray language/communication in a certain way, and these portrayals can become naturalized and common knowledge, without ever truly being questioned. As a result, "metalanguage can work at an ideological level, and influence people's actions and priorities in a wide range of ways" (Jaworski et al., 2004, p.3; see also Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). In other words, when metadiscourse about certain communicative practices becomes commonplace, it begins to structure people's understanding of language and communication, and also of people themselves (who speak a certain way or who use certain communicative technologies). As Thurlow et al. (2019) argue, metadiscourse about digital media is thus tightly connected with the language ideological processes of "iconization", "erasure", and "recursivity" (cf. Irvine & Gal, 2000) as well as with media ideologies (cf. Gershon, 2010c). In sum, they reveal important matters related to the "social meanings" (i.e. the social significance for people themselves) and "cultural discourses" (i.e. the macro-level ideological processes of public discourses) of digital media and digital communication.

With regard to research on metadiscourse about digital media, I follow Spilioti (2015), who offers a critical overview of research concerned with discourse *about* digital communication. She reviews four key areas of research in studies investigating discourses about digital communication, in the mass media (the news media in particular), and in social media.

- Discourses about digital sociality (i.e. utopian and dystopian discourses about the impact of digital media on people's social relationships)
- Discourses about digital equality and diversity (i.e. utopian and dystopian discourses about

digital spaces being open, transparent, equal, and diverse)

- Discourses about youth and digital media (i.e. utopian and dystopian discourses about digital nativism)
- Discourses about digital language (utopian and dystopian discourses about the impact of digital media on language use and practices)

Spilioti (2015, p.145) remarks that although popular discourses fluctuate between positive and negative commentary and can change over time, people tend to remain anxious about the same issues such as the loss of stability with regards to language standards/norms and social structures. Previous research regarding the linguistic and visual metadiscourse about digital media has discussed the prevalence of "moral panic" discourses, which are based on ideologies of prescriptivism and technological determinism. Since I discuss "moral panics" in greater detail throughout this thesis (particularly in Chapter 6), here I only briefly define the concept. I follow Critcher (2008, p.1140) who defines "moral panics" as "extreme forms of risk discourses integral to the process of moral regulation". In other words, moral panic discourses are a reflection of people's worries about certain risks, and serve to regulate and counter immoral behavior by seeking sociocultural power (Critcher, 2008; see also Buckingham & Jensen, 2012). [9] In this regard, I take into account previous metadiscourse studies such as Tagliamonte & Denis (2008), Jones & Schieffelin (2009), and Thurlow (2006, 2014) which examine discourses of moral panic in the media, with a focus on digital communication. These studies all highlight a common ideological discourse: one that revolves around fear and concerns about the way that digital media affect (standard) language. The media comments that Thurlow (2006, 2014) analyzes in his studies reveal judgments that are naturalized and portrayed as common knowledge. For instance, the idea that "netspeak" is dumbing down English and leading to a breakdown of Standard English is very popular in the press. Such comments presuppose the notion that standard language is necessarily better; as a result, anything that is not standard (i.e. new media language) is thus incorrect and bad. Likewise, Squires (2010) investigates value judgments found in social media, which revolve

around notions of linguistic and grammatical correctness and normativity. For example, online participants comment on the use of "internet language" as being a "linguistic plague", "unprofessional" or "nonsense" (p.473). Here, these ideologies about digital language are set against the backdrop of prescriptivism. Besides being motivated by a standard language ideology, popular discourses about digital communication also draw on an ideology of technological determinism which emphasizes a causal/deterministic relationship between digital media and social changes, as many scholars have demonstrated (e.g. Androutsopoulos, 2011; Deumert, 2014; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Lister et al, 2009; Spilioti, 2015; Squires 2010). Popular representations of digital language and communication in the media often accentuate a sort of moral panic where digital media is construed as being the main cause of language and communication changes; such comments also highlight deep-seated media ideologies (cf. Gershon, 2010c). Here, digital media and digital language are responsible for broader communicative issues such as literacy problems (e.g. Thurlow, 2006, 2014). Hence, discourses that claim that people no longer know how to write properly are often associated with digital language, but they are also concerned with a broader sense of societal and cultural threat. This closely aligns with Critcher (2008) and Buckingham & Jensen (2012) who emphasize the fact that moral panic discourses are often about wider concerns about social changes and a fear of modernity and technological change. Although pessimistic framings of digital media and digital communication in the media are often connected to the digital media practices of young people/teenagers (see Thurlow, 2014), other demographics are also targeted by the news media: young children and women/girls. As such, I am also informed by research concerning children and their digital media use (e.g. Buckingham & Jensen, 2012; Chaudron, 2015; Livingstone et al., 2018), as well as studies of "moral panic" with regards to girls and digital media (e.g. Jeffery, 2017; Vickery, 2014). Finally, although most studies have investigated *linguistic* metadiscursive commentary about digital media, I closely follow Thurlow (2017) and Thurlow et al. (2019) who expand digital discourse scholarship by including a multimodal perspective in their investigation of *visual* metadiscourse about digital media.

Overarching research questions

As I said, it is well known that digital discourse is often depicted negatively in the news, particularly in English-language contexts (e.g. Thurlow 2006, 2007, 2014; Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Vickery, 2017) where discourses of "moral panic" appear ubiquitous. These metadiscursive framings are closely related to media ideologies (Gershon, 2010c), that is, people's beliefs about the different media they use and their effect on users. By the same token, people's beliefs about digital media are shaped by deep-seated social stereotypes and political economies such as gender. In the current thesis, I offer new perspectives in the field of digital discourse studies by examining the "cultural discourses" and "social meanings" of digital media from a multimodal and a multilingual perspective. I analyze different discursive examples that reveal the interplay between language ideologies, media ideologies, and gender ideologies. In the first part of this thesis, I focus on public discourses (i.e. cultural discourses) about digital communication, and in the second part, I explore the social meanings of such discourses in actual readers and users' personal stories. Ultimately, I am interested in the relationship between public discourses and private experiences and how these two connect or disconnect. In order to structure my argument, I follow two broad sets of research questions:

1. How do multinational and multilingual news stories "make sense" of digital media? More specifically, what language, media, and gender ideologies are produced in their articles?
2. What is the relationship between these top-down cultural discourses and the bottom-up social meanings of the users of digital media? Specifically, how do female readers/viewers/users understand, negotiate, and challenge these media and gender ideologies?

Research design

As I specified in the Preface, this thesis was undertaken as part of the larger inter-university project "What's up, Switzerland? Language, Individuals, and Ideologies in Mobile Messaging", which was funded by the Swiss National Foundation. The overall goal of the project was to investigate the linguistic and communicative properties of digital communication with a special focus on *Whats'App*. My thesis was specifically aligned with sub-project D, "The Cultural Discourses and Social Meanings of Mobile Communication", which served as a meta-level framing for the other three sub-projects that focused more on the grammatical and graphical properties of Whats'App messages. Along these lines, Sub-project D was organized around two complementary strands of research (which follow the thesis's research questions). Strand I involved the creation of a unique archive of regional, national, and international news stories concerned with digital language and communication (the *Digital Discourse Database* – DDD*)*, and the analysis of those news stories (all the sources of the newspaper extracts analyzed are listed in Appendix A). Strand II comprised a more ethnographic perspective with the implementation of a focus group study in order to analyze people's digital media use and practices. In sum, Sub-project D was designed to complement the other sub-projects by taking a metadiscursive and language-ideological approach to digital communication. Therefore, since I attempt to tease out specific ideologies in discourse, my work follows the tradition of *critical* discourse studies, which together with multimodality, makes up my methodological approach to this thesis. In the following section, I would like to outline this approach.

Methodological approach: Multimodal critical discourse analysis

In this thesis, I define my approach as a multimodal critical discourse analysis (Machin, 2013), and I often follow Fairclough (1989, p.20-21) and Thurlow & Aiello (2007, p.313) in order to structure my analyses around two steps: one more descriptive, and one more interpretive and critical.

Depending partly on whether I am focusing on verbal and/or visual discourse, my analyses draw on a range of techniques including (visual) content analysis (e.g. Bell, 2001), corpus-supported CDA (e.g. Baker et al., 2008) using the corpus analysis toolkit AntConc (see Anthony, 2018), and social semiotics (e.g. van Leeuwen, 2005). Since each chapter utilizes different methods and includes a section outlining the methods being used, here I only describe the general methodological approach that informs my thesis: multimodal critical discourse analysis (Ledin & Machin, 2018; Machin; 2013). Ledin & Machin (2018) discuss "multimodal critical discourse analysis" as they attempt to address the limitations of "multimodality" as a grand theory by taking into account the *critical* aspect of critical discourse studies (CDS).

The purpose of *critical* discourse studies is to explore social phenomena beyond the mere description of language in use; therefore, critical discourse analysts are interested in how language shapes our social world and is shaped by it and in revealing whose interests are at stake (e.g. Gee, 2011; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on the linguistic characteristics of social processes and argues that power relations lie in discourse. Hence, critical discourse scholars' aim is to deconstruct discourses in order to reveal relationships of power and inequality and resist them. CDA sets out to expose what seems to be natural, normal, and objective in discourse itself. Therefore, critical discourse scholars are particularly interested in exploring the construction of ideologies since "ideological structures are necessarily concerned with the analysis of power relations and social discrimination" (Jaworski & Coupland, 2014, p.27). In this regard, CDA is an approach that is oriented towards social change and that sees discourse as shaping and constructing our vision of reality through the transmission of ideologies (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2001). CDA has been most commonly used in the analysis of media discourse, particularly because media institutions have the power and capacity to influence public opinion (e.g. Bell & Garrett, 1998, p.6). The fact that most media discourse analyses take a critical approach is not surprising when one considers the role of CDA in the uncovering and challenging of power relations. News stories are not simply "recounted"; they are

structured in a specific way which reveals a particular position or point of view. They also present certain values and attitudes as "natural" and "normal". What Ledin & Machin (2018) ultimately suggest is to add such a critical approach to the principles of multimodality – which draw on Halliday's (1985) tradition of systemic functional linguistics (SFL).

Multimodality draws on the tradition of "social semiotics", which allows for the study of "the semiotic potential of a given semiotic resource" and for exploring "how that resource has been, is, and can be used for purposes of communication" (van Leeuwen, 2005, p.5; see also Djonov & Zhao, 2018; Jewitt et al., 2016; Ledin & Machin, 2018, for recent overviews of the field). Since discourse scholars increasingly address semiotic modes different from language, a social semiotic approach can be especially useful. Also, just as CDA can be useful for the analysis of news media discourse, so is social semiotics. Indeed, news media discourse is multimodal since "its meaning is realized through more than one semiotic code" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p.183). In the case of print news stories, the stories are produced using both written words and images, two semiotic modes, each of which warrant a different type of analysis. In the study of visual design (and any other type of communication), one explores semiotic resources that perform a particular sort of semiotic work, or metafunction (cf. Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p.140). In the case of visual analysis, it is important to keep in mind that images do not have only one true meaning. Rose (2012) suggests that the best way to analyze images is to try to justify one's reading; in order to do this, one needs an explicit visual methodology (Rose, 2012, p.xviii). Following on the tradition of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and Michael Halliday (1985), Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) developed a visual grammar to analyze images and examine visual resources which create meaning. In their visual grammar, they address the three metafunctions of (visual) language: representational (i.e. depiction of the world), compositional (i.e. textual arrangement/layout), and interactional (i.e. relation with audience). In sum, a social semiotic approach to images allows us to deconstruct a text and explore how textual strategies are adopted to convey certain meanings. These textual strategies (e.g. image layout, point of view, modality)

are semiotic resources that create meaning potentials. These "possible" meanings are infinite, but those who produce images often direct them towards one "preferred" meaning (see Hall, 1997). As a result, a social semiotic analysis aims to explore how these preferred meanings are constructed and what their ideological end is, following the three metafunctions explained above: representational, interactional, and compositional (see also Aiello, 2006). While these three metafunctions of communication form the "core" of multimodal analysis, Ledin & Machin (2018) argue that there are some limitations in the ways scholars use these tools. In order to address the often too descriptive nature of multimodal analysis, the authors suggest taking a more "critical" perspective by taking into account the connection between texts and social practices and associated "canons of use" (i.e. the "traditions of use" of instances of communication) (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p.501). [10] Therefore, although I draw on different methods throughout my thesis (which all fall under the broader spectrum of CDS), my ultimate goal is always critical in the sense that I attempt to challenge what seems to be taken for granted and "natural" by exploring the "cultural discourses" and "social meanings" of digital media. This brings me back to my two strands of research activity, which I outline below.

Strand I: The Digital Discourse Database

One of the main goals of Sub-project D was the creation of a multinational and multilingual repository of newspaper articles dealing with digital media language and communication, that would be useful for other scholars and students working in the field of digital discourse. With the help of a web-designer based in Switzerland and under the supervision of the director of Sub-project D, Prof. Dr. Crispin Thurlow, we created the *Digital Discourse Database* with three main sections (see Appendix B). The *About* section presents the DDD and how to use it; the *Search* section lists the news articles (on the right) and the search tags (on the left); and the *Post* section allows any researcher to post a relevant entry.

All of the articles archived in the DDD are concerned with language and communication

in digital media contexts, and were published between 2014 and 2018. The archive is multilingual and multinational; it covers Swiss, European and international news in different languages – primarily German, French, and English. The archive is also multimodal since it includes links to news stories with images. Additionally, it is important to note that the archive contains a "core dataset" of articles which resulted from a consistent and rigorous search in Nexis (formely LexisNexis) which utilized 1) the same keywords, 2) the same news outlets, and 3) the same timeframe, in addition to other more "random" subsets from other time periods, countries, and sources different from Nexis. These other "random" articles are articles that my colleagues sent me (because they were relevant for my research), others come from another study which specifically focused on "sexting" (n=45), and others are articles from online newspaper platforms different from Nexis that a research assistant and I used to find relevant articles before we had established our "core parameters" (n=95). Because Nexis did not contain all of the publications we had listed in the proposal for Sub-project D of the overall SNF project, we had to seek out the websites of those publications not provided by Nexis. However, the search engines on these newspaper websites are far less sophisticated than Nexis's search engine, which is why those searches are not as systematic. Moreover, the time period of a search cannot be set on these sites. Therefore, the DDD database is slightly swayed and not completely representative. However, this research design limitation does not alter the purpose of my research which is to investigate how news stories discuss the same issues across borders, and the ideological implications that ensue. Here is a breakdown of the "core dataset", which contains news outlets from Nexis:

Switzerland (French): Le Matin, La Tribune de Genève, 24 Heures, Le Temps

Switzerland (German): Tages-Anzeiger, Appenzeller Zeitung, Sonntagszeitung, Die Weltwoche

Germany: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine, Hamburger Abendblatt, Die Zeit, Die Welt

US: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The LA Times, USA Today

UK: The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Mirror, The Daily Mail, Metro

France: Le Figaro, Les Echos, L'Express, Le Monde

The selection of the specific news outlets above was based on the Research Proposal of Sub-project

D – which suggested specific news outlets (those that are underlined above) – and also based on the available publications on Nexis. The dataset includes both print and online news stories, and a wide selection of newspapers representing diverse readerships. All in all, we selected the above newspapers in order to include a range of news outlets and to include high-circulation newspapers. Although the whole DDD includes articles from 2014 until 2018, the "core dataset" only includes articles between January 2016 and September 2017. The articles that fall outside of the timeframe between January 2016 and September 2017 all come from other "random" subsets (see above).

The "core" keyword searches were made up of the following combinations of words:

WhatsApp AND language

Facebook AND language

smartphone AND language

texting (SMS in French and German) AND language

emoji

The choice of the above keywords was based on my research purposes and interests, and those of the larger Sinergia project, which investigates multimodal communication on WhatsApp. Although we had originally planned on using more keywords, time did not permit us to do so, especially because our research assistant's contract was limited. After the keyword search identified specific articles, we removed duplicate articles and also omitted articles that did not focus on language/communication in digital media contexts (e.g. articles about artificial intelligence, or about Mark Zuckerberg).

All of the relevant articles that were selected for inclusion in the DDD were then coded with "tags" in order to facilitate the search and retrieval of specific articles. Each news story was coded with the following tags: the name of the newspaper, date of publication, language, country, topic (a news story could be tagged with more than one topic tag), and image (a news story could also be tagged with more than one image tag). Finally, each news story in the database includes a short summary of the article as well as a hyperlink that directs users to the Nexis link to the article

or the original link. Regarding the criteria used to select the topic tags and image tags, our student assistant and I only chose tags that were directly relevant to my research purposes (topic tags such as "youth", "emojis", and "language threat", and image tags such as "male" and "female") as well as tags that were recurrent in various articles (topic tags such as "artificial intelligence" and "autocorrect", and image tags such as "keyboard" and "logo"). Therefore, if an article included an image with, for instance, an American flag, we did not include the image tag "flag" because it would not be directly relevant to my research and would be a tag that would not be recurrent. Regarding images, it is important to note that articles stored in the DDD with a Nexis link do not include any images simply because Nexis only reproduces the verbal texts of news stories. Therefore, when possible (Nexis sometimes adds a link to the original article), we added the link to the original article in the DDD, in order to have access to the images accompanying the text.

I display below in Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 general statistics about the DDD, which contains a total of 1403 articles as of December 2019. [11]

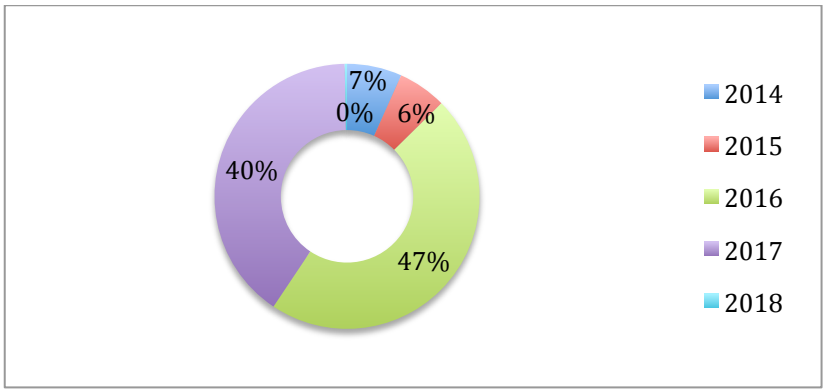

Table 1.1: Time period of the DDD

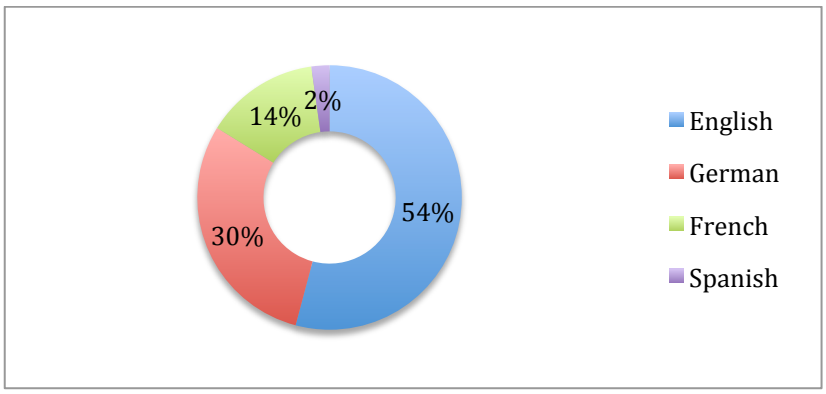

Table 1.2: Languages represented in the DDD

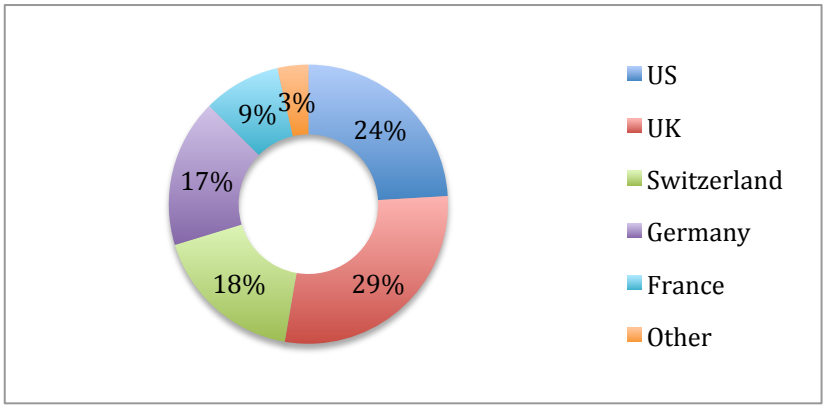

Table 1.3: Countries represented in the DDD

In the above diagrams, it is important to note the overrepresentation of English-language and German-language articles when compared with French-language articles, which shows that the topic investigated seems to be less prevalent in the French-speaking news. I did not rectify this number imbalance in order to respect the consistency and systematization of the search (i.e. same keywords, same timeframe, and same news outlets from Nexis). All in all, the DDD covers a wide range of news stories which serve as evidence of dominant cultural discourses (including visual representations) about digital media and communication. Eventually, my goal is to investigate how/if those cultural discourses found in the news media shape the meanings and uses of digital media users (see Strand II).

Strand II: Focus groups

I decided to conduct a focus group study because I wanted to learn how young women responded to and made sense of news media discourse regarding digital media and digital communication (i.e. how they "spoke back" to news media discourse). I was particularly concerned with their feelings and insights on problematic gender and media ideologies recurrent in the Western press. Therefore, I used the empirical evidence that I had found in my news discourse analysis as a stimulus in four focus groups conducted with young women, and gave them the opportunity to "speak back" to what they saw in the news media. In this way, I examined the complex intersection of top-down cultural discourses and bottom-up social meanings and/or practices. This intersection serves to highlight how media ideologies (Gershon, 2010c) are produced across multiple domains as well as the ways in which they are either taken up or resisted by regular people. The trigger questions that I asked the participants concerned the representation of women and men using digital media in news media imagery as well as questions concerning other more general media ideologies, such as those regarding children's use of digital media and the concept of digital addiction (see questionnaire in Appendix C). [12]

I conducted four focus groups with a particular type of participant (young women between 18 and 30 years old, who own and use digital devices) in order to look for patterns and themes across the groups. The goal was "to conduct focus groups until [I] [had] reached theoretical saturation" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p.27), and four focus groups seemed to be an ideal number. The four groups were composed of the same type of participants. I did not divide the groups based on any other features (e.g. occupation, age, class, education, or race). Therefore, I utilized a "single-category design" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p.28). [13] Table 1.4, displayed below, shows the list of participants. [14]

Focus group 1 (FG 1)	**Focus group 2 (FG 2)**
Location: Martigny, Valais, Switzerland Date: 21 May 2018 Duration: 1:01:11	Location: Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland Date: 28 May 2018 Duration: 57:15
1. Julie, 24, a marketing assistant 2. Cindy, 24, a social worker 3. Melanie, 24, an insurance agent 4. Anna, 25, a physical therapist 5. Tania, 24, a beautician	1. Jennifer, 28, an HR assistant 2. Sophie, 28, a university assistant 3. Sandra, 28, a management consultant 4. Tiffany, 28, a management consultant
Focus group 3 (FG 3)	**Focus group 4 (FG 4)**
Location: Vernayaz, Valais, Switzerland Date: 26 May 2018 Duration: 1:01:55	Location: Martigny, Valais, Switzerland Date: 1 June 2018 Duration: 58:10
1. Charlotte, 19, a student 2. Veronica, 19, a student 3. Samantha, 18, an apprentice employee 4. Julie, 22, a commercial employee 5. Adelina, 23, a teacher	1. Pauline, 30, a makeup artist 2. Ines, 30, a social worker 3. Aline, 30, a social worker 4. Janice, 30, a graphic designer

Table 1.4: List of participants in each focus group

Taking a cue from feminist media research which looks into "inequalities and constructed (often symbolic) differences in media practices with very real consequences in everyday life" (Bachmann et al., p.4), my thesis seeks to explore the same issues through two levels of analysis: a "micro-level" analysis and an "external level" of analysis (cf. Byerly, 2016). The micro-level analysis focuses on media representations of women and is mainly descriptive; it aims to explore issues of underrepresentation, misrepresentation, and stereotypes in the media. The external level of analysis is concerned with the audience's response and the ways in which the audience (i.e.

women) are impacted by the media's messages. In the external level of analysis, I employ ethnographic methods such as focus group studies. However, my research does not include other important levels of analysis proposed by Byerly (2016) such as the meso-level (i.e. concerned with the generation of media content), and the macro-level (i.e. concerned with the institutional and financial aspects that influence media messages). Nevertheless, my thesis aims at investigating to what extent news media representations (i.e. micro-level analysis) shapes users' meanings and uses (i.e. external level of analysis).

Thesis overview

Part I: Cultural discourses

The first part of my thesis consists of three chapters which critically analyze news media discourse regarding digital communication. In Chapter 2, I outline the language and semiotic ideologies prevalent in news media discourse while focusing on articles concerning emojis. [15] I chose to focus on emojis because this type of visual communication is an important aspect of the overall WhatsApp project of which this thesis is a part. Ultimately, I analyze the construction of a discourse of "language endangerment" (cf. Duchêne & Heller, 2007) in the news and show how such a discourse reveals journalists' "semiotic ideologies" (Keane, 2003) and what modes of communication they view as being superior to others. The news media's discourse of "moral panic" with regards to the perceived threat posed to language by digital visual communication (i.e. emojis) shows that journalists truly "misrecognize" the nature of language, visual communication, and digital media. Then, in Chapter 3, I focus on a different kind of "moral panic" discourse where I analyze the news media's representations of children's digital media practices. I focus on "children" because I noticed that the words "children" and "enfants" were frequent nouns in the English and French datasets of news stories that I collected. Also, since past research has focused on moral panic discourses surrounding young people and teens' digital practices (e.g. Thurlow,

2006, 2014; Thurlow et al., 2019), I hope to shed new light on a different demographic. In Chapter 3, I ultimately show how news stories linguistically and visually "construct" an idealized concept of a risk-free childhood. The news media's ideologies are often framed around a discourse of "risk", which is problematic, misleading, and narrowing since this view justifies practices centered on surveillance and restriction, in the name of children's safety (see Vickery, 2017). Finally, Chapter 4 also examines media ideologies, and is the first "gender" chapter of this thesis. This chapter serves as a way for me to set the scene regarding the treatment of gender in the news media (see Harp et al., 2018). In Chapter 4, I quantitatively and qualitatively analyze news media images representing women/girls using digital devices. I examine how news media discourse about digital media constructs a particular "regime of truth" regarding the ways women and girls use – or are supposed to use – digital media. I discuss two noteworthy phenomena: first, that a majority of news media images choose to portray young women with digital devices as opposed to men with digital devices, and secondly, that these women are depicted in very narrow visual terms that focus on women's conversational skills and emotions. In sum, although each of the three chapters of this first part has a distinct focus, they nonetheless all demonstrate how the news media misrepresents certain aspects of digital communication as well as certain groups of users and how the media constructs problematic "regimes of truth" across modes, languages, and nations.

Part II: Social meanings

In the second part of my thesis, I analyze four focus group interviews which I conducted with young female users of digital media. The treatment of young women by the news media (cf. Chapter 4) made me curious about what young women themselves thought about the news media's representations. Therefore, Chapter 5 centers on young female users and readers' responses to the news media's visual representation of women's digital media practices. Following a feminist post-structuralist approach (Baxter, 2003), I ultimately demonstrate how the female participants in my focus groups negotiate the news media's gendered representations of women

and digital media, and how they (re)produce *and* challenge gender ideologies. Indeed, although women reproduce some of the news media's gendered ideologies when discussing digital media use, they also challenge such ideologies, which shows that audiences do not blindly accept anything the news media says (cf. Hall, 1997). Finally, in Chapter 6, I elaborate on these young users' own "media ideologies" (see Gershon, 2010c). I outline how the news media shapes people's ideologies about digital media through the analysis of three themes that circulate across participants and across groups: the participants' acceptance of the news media's moral panic discourse; their negotiation of the meaning of digital media in relation to older media; and their negotiation of privacy and surveillance concerns. Ultimately, I discuss the circulation of moral panic discourses between the news media and actual users, and show how users genuinely struggle to make sense of digital media.

By exploring the cultural discourses and the social meanings of digital communication, I demonstrate the multiple ways in which digital media discourse circulates across languages and nations, across linguistic and visual modes, and between institutions (e.g. the news media, stock photography) and actual users. Although the same negative and reductionist discourses are present in multiple international news outlets, it is ultimately up to readers/viewers/users themselves to either take up or reject such ideologies. With Hall's (1997) "circuit of culture" in mind, I investigate the representational function of the media and its role in the reproduction of social power and inequalities as well as the representational work done by the audience, with a particular focus on the feelings and emotions provoked by public discourses and private responses to them. Therefore, I conclude this thesis by discussing the emotional and affective undercurrent that imbues all of the chapters, across news media discourse and in everyday conversation. Following scholars who examine "affect" (e.g. Ahmed, 2004; Clough & Halley, 2007; Grossberg, 1992; Massumi, 2002; Wee, 2016), Chapter 7 focuses on how affective states and practices travel and circulate across different domains, how the press can influence its audience's affective state, and how the audience challenges, resists, and/or takes up the press's emotionally-charged ideologies.

PART I
CULTURAL DISCOURSES

Chapter 2

"Emoji is dragging us back to the dark ages": Discourse of "language endangerment" in international news reports

Setting the scene: Visualizing digital discourse

In digital discourse studies, it is well established that newsmakers often maintain an unduly negative perspective on the impact of digital technologies especially vis-à-vis young people's linguistic and communicative practices (Thurlow 2006, 2007; also Tagliamonte & Denis 2008). With their particular institutional and cultural investment as elite language workers or wordsmiths, journalists consistently reproduce language-ideological depictions of digital discourse which exaggerate its newness and distinctiveness, and which erase individual variation, reflexivity and creativity. In this chapter, we examine an emerging but closely allied metadiscursive framing of digital discourse: the perceived threat to language posed by visual communication and, specifically, emojis. [16] In this case, we witness how long-standing narratives of linguistic degradation or ruin usually attributed to technology are redirected to the deleterious impact of visual communication. We refer to this as a discourse of *language endangerment* (cf. Duchêne & Heller, 2007). Instead of a

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This chapter is closely based on a co-authored publication: Thurlow, C. & Jaroski, V. (2020). 'Emoji invasion': The semiotic ideology of language endangerment in multilingual news discourse. In C. Thurlow, C. Dürscheid & F. Diémoz (Eds), *Visualizing digital discourse: Interactional, institutional and ideological perspectives*. Berlin: de Gruyter

concern to defend (minority) languages from other (majority) languages, however, we find language itself being construed as autonomous and superior, and, more importantly, in need of protection from visual communication. As we will argue, this perceived threat to language is underwritten by deep-seated beliefs and/or misconceptions about how communication works, how meaning is made, and how different communicative modes (e.g. words, images) intersect; all of which are quintessential matters of semiotic ideology (cf. Keane, 2003; also Thurlow, 2017). As a case in point – and as a good starting point – we offer a typical story from the UK's Guardian newspaper extracted in Figure 2.1 below, where we see the kind of public push-back at the core of this chapter:

Figure 2.1: The Guardian, UK, 25 June 2015. Original image caption: Emojis are merely a depiction of the body language signals that humans have been reading for centuries. (Image source: Flickr).

Figure 2.1 displays a dramatic – possibly playful – story about emojis taking over and replacing words. As the by-line explains, 'Emojis are the fastest growing language in the UK – what does this mean for the future of communication?' The doom-and-gloom stance of the article is cued further by the use of an emoticon in the headline for expressing dismay or despair. No less importantly, the accompanying image also does some important framing work (see Thurlow, Aiello & Portmann, 2019); here, we have a photograph of an old-fashioned typewriter with the letter keys

replaced by emojis. The image is itself framed and anchored with the following tagline: 'Emojis are merely a depiction of the body language signals that humans have been reading for centuries.'

In the short, opening space of this news story, we have a quintessential encapsulation of the language endangerment discourse and the various ways it is rhetorically accomplished. In a nutshell, we find emojis being framed explicitly as a bona fide language and as an external, unwanted and destructive assault on not only language but human communication altogether. Meanwhile we have language itself being restricted to written language, and in a way which is patently anachronistic – perhaps specially for journalists, a nostalgic, self-referential appeal to the typewriter. Finally, we see how emojis are dismissively and erroneously (see 'merely a depiction') rendered equivalent to so-called body language. As it happens, this short story, for all of its dubious views on language and communication, turns out to be fairly measured, answering its own "end of language as we know it" provocation with an emphatic "no", and with a clear understanding that human communicative practice is always changing over time. Nonetheless, such is the power of the headline, the influence of subeditors and picture editors, that the story as a whole presents readers with an overarchingly negative view. [17]

This chapter locates itself in digital discourse studies (see Thurlow, 2018, for a recent overview), a field which typically focuses on sociolinguistic and discursive phenomena in and around digital media. More specifically, the chapter examines commentary *about* digital discourse. As such, our goal here is not to analyze digital discourse per se and comment on the use of emojis as a digital practice, but rather to explore popular discourse *about* emojis as a means of revealing how the endangerment discourse hinges on important semiotic questions related to language, mode, and communication. In sum, we investigate language about language or discourse about discourse – hence *metadiscourse*. And this is particularly important when it comes to high-stakes, high-authority spaces like the news media.

Studies of metadiscourse orient heavily to – or are allied with – the notion of language ideologies which, as Woolard and Schieffelin (1994, p.55-56) explain, "envision and enact links of

language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology." In other words, when people get to talking about other people's ways of speaking or communicating, they are invariably (more) invested in wider acts of social categorization and judgement. Metadiscursive commentary, like language ideologies, is almost always organized by the same three discursive features or actions: iconization, erasure and recursivity (Irvine and Gal, 2000). Respectively, what this means is that certain stereotypical linguistic features or practices are singled out for critique or ridicule; individual variation, creativity and other benefits are meanwhile overlooked; and the ostensibly linguistic "facts" are extrapolated to other aspects of speakers, such as their intellectual capacity, social behavior, or moral rectitude. When it comes to digital discourse, and following Gershon (2010), we also find metadiscursive commentary bound up in tightly related media ideologies, which is to say beliefs about, for example, the material affordances of technology, the nature of authorship, and the apparent newness of everything.

Increasingly, scholars of digital discourse have been considering the ways language intersects with other modes of communication, thereby addressing the inherently multimodal nature of discursive practice. There are certainly good reasons for opening up digital discourse studies to a broader multimodal perspective; the most obvious of which lies in simply paying more attention to visual communication. We know well, for example, that even text-based digital discourse is often as much visual as it is linguistic, concerned as much with the look of words as with their semantic or stylistic properties (e.g., Vaisman, 2014). In addition to research on issues like orthographic and typographic design, however, there is also more and more work being done on the communicative uses of visual resources such as emoji, video, GIFs, and non-moving images (e.g., Androutsopoulos & Tereick, 2015; Dürscheid & Siever, 2017; Dürscheid & Meletis, 2019). There is also value in considering how visuality in digital discourse is depicted in, for example, commercial advertising, print or broadcast news, cinema and television narratives and/or public policy and educational settings. Certainly, and as Thurlow (2017; also Thurlow, Aiello &

Portmann, 2019) has shown, visual discourse encodes and combines a range of language and media ideologies.

Finally, as in Thurlow's (2017) study of mediatized representations of sexting, we too are keen to consider how metadiscursive framings of digital discourse are also structured by *semiotic ideologies* (after Keane, 2003; see also Parmentier, 1994 for the first reference of semiotic ideology). In this case, we find speakers expressing their beliefs about meaning-making and the relative value of different semiotic modes. This is very evident in the ways people – journalists and others – discuss the interplay between language and visual communication, and the ways they understand (or not) the particular affordances of different semiotic modes; for example, in ideas about the realism of pictures or the intellectual, civilizational importance of words. Specifically, our interest lies in the beliefs and attitudes regarding the perceived superiority/inferiority of two modes: images and writing. While orality is often perceived as being inferior to literacy, we explore the dominant ideology regarding the value of words vis-à-vis images.

In essence, against the backdrop of previous research on the metadiscursive framing of digital language, we examine common beliefs and misunderstandings surrounding a specific type of digital discourse (i.e. emojis) and shed light on language and semiotic ideologies. This chapter is thus structured in a way to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the main language-related discourses about emojis in French and English-language news stories?
2) In what ways is discourse of "language endangerment" organized?
3) What do such discourses reveal in terms of language and connected semiotic ideologies?

Research design

Here, we draw on a sample of 70 different English-language and French-language news reports from between 2014 and 2017 (see Appendix D for a list of the sources of the news articles). The

articles are all drawn from the *Digital Discourse Database* (DDD). As a reminder, the DDD is an open-access archive populated with newspaper stories addressing language and communication in various digital-media contexts (cf. Chapter 1). For the current dataset, we first selected all stories from the period January 2014 to September 2017. All 910 articles (717 English-language articles and 193 French-language articles) from the DDD were then imported into *AntConc*, a freeware concordancer intended for corpus-linguistic analysis (see Baker et al., 2008). In this way, we started with two corpora – one in French, one in English – and used the in-built concordance tool for focusing on keywords and their semantic clusters. We selected out all uses of *language* (in English) and *langue* and *langage* (in French) as a way to focus on instances where journalists were specifically and explicitly referring to language. We were left with 715 occurrences of *language* and 393 of *langue/langage* (see Appendix E for snapshots of the Antconc French and English concordances of the words *language* and *langue/langage*). Given our specific interest in emojis, we then sub-sampled further by attending only to stories about language *and* emojis, manually discarding cases addressing, for example, foreign languages, language skills in general or language in artificial intelligence. In this way, our final dataset comprised 62 French-language instances and 106 English-language instances of stories which, much like the Guardian article above, focused specifically on the relation between language and emojis – altogether a total of 168 distinctive lines of data.

The analysis is thus organized into two steps: one more quantitative and descriptive, one more qualitative and interpretative and critical (cf. Fairclough, 1989, p.20–21; Thurlow & Aiello, 2007, p.313). In the first step, we rely mostly on the concordance analysis for revealing basic numerical trends and for identifying the most common rhetorical *tactics* used in the news media's framing of the emoji-and-language relationship. We performed a corpus-based analysis of expanded concordances of the word "language" (in both French and English) in order to identify the most common rhetorical tactics by which discourses about language and emojis are usually framed/organized. Corpus-based linguistics refers to research conducted using a large collection of

data electronically stored and focuses on the quantity of data analyzed. When used in conjunction with CDA, corpus-based research has proved very successful in the analysis of news media discourse because it adds a quantitative dimension that CDA lacks (e.g. Baker et al., 2008; Mautner, 2007). The two main processes that are used in corpus-based analysis are "collocation" (i.e. what words certain words are frequently associated with) and "concordance" (what a word's context looks like). In this chapter, we combine the critical approach of CDA with a more quantitative perspective, but not necessarily in the same ways that Baker et al. (2008) or Mautner (2007) do. Specifically, we use techniques taken from corpus linguistics to visualize data and to generate systematic and consistent data using Antconc (see Chapter 3 for a similar approach). We used a corpus-based "concordance" analysis to obtain two representative corpora of all of the instances of "language" related to emojis. On this basis, we arrived at the larger metadiscursive *strategy* of language endangerment which becomes the focus of the second step of the analysis where we look more closely at examples from our dataset with a specific view to semiotic ideologies. The distinction we draw between rhetorical tactics and discursive strategies is borrowed from De Certeau (1984), although in a less political, more analytical sense; strategies refer to larger-scale formations and tactics to the specific actions by which formations are achieved.

Analysis

Step 1: Pinpointing "language endangerment"

Following a loosely organized content analysis, we identified three rhetorical tactics across our French- and English-language data. These were not the only tactics or tropes at work but they were the three most common ones (see the indicative percentages given below). To be clear, a single line or instance generated by AntConc could be coded more than once if it indexed any two or all three of the rhetorical tactics. As far as possible we have tried to draw examples from different papers and stories; we have also tried to give examples in both languages, indicating (underlining) the parts of the extract under consideration. This is not to say that the rhetorical

tactics were equally represented across the two languages; such a comparative analysis is beyond the scope of the current chapter. In the initial descriptive step, we offer just two examples of each rhetorical tactic; other examples follow in Step 2 where we consider the third tactic in more detail along with a few German- and Spanish-language examples for good measure.

First rhetorical tactic: Emojis as a (new) language

By far the most common trope to appear in our dataset (57.5%), emojis are commonly treated as equivalent to language/s. Take, for example, Extract 2.1 with its use of "langage emoji" (emoji language) or Extract 2.2 which refers to the "UK's fastest growing language" – a simultaneous appeal to its alarming rise and spread (see next section).

Extract 2.1

Les participants doivent décoder des messages en langage emoji. (Le Figaro, France, 17 July 2017)

Participants need to decode messages in emoji language.

Extract 2.2

As the UK's fastest growing language, emoji characters need to represent of a broad range of people. (The Mirror, UK, 23 January 2017)

As with texting style, emojis are framed explicitly or implicitly as foreign or cryptic and therefore in need of translation or decoding ('décoder'). Emojis may be indirectly rendered a language when set in comparison or contrast with references to real or proper language – or, from Extract 2.4 below, so-called traditional languages ('langues traditionelles'). (Nor does it help when academics themselves speak in similarly problematic, reductionistic terms; see Ge & Herring, 2018.) Indeed, the driving objective in defining emojis as a language is to call attention to the negative impact this is having on language per se, as we see in the third rhetorical tactic. But the rhetorical stepping-stone for this is the depiction of "emoji language" as rapidly expanding and pervasive.

Second rhetorical tactic: The rise and spread of emojis

Emerging in 21.5% of our dataset, we find evidence for the same kind of "revolutionary" rhetoric Thurlow (2006) identified in relation to mediatized representations of text-messaging; in this case, we find dramatic appeals to the alarming rise and spread of emojis (See Extract 2.8 below for an explicit reference to 'révolutionné' (revolutionized).) This revolutionary framing of emojis is produced also through their apparent or relative newness – sometimes with comical effect, as in Extract 2.3 with its invocation of "the fastest growing language in history".

Extract 2.3

Emojis, a popular way to replicate non-verbal communication, are used six billion times a day and have been described as the fastest growing language in history. (Telegraph, UK, 14 August 2017)

Extract 2.4

Mais face à la déferlante de symboles, faut-il craindre un appauvrissement des langues traditionnelles? (La Tribune de Genève, Switzerland, 6 February 2016)

But facing the surge of symbols, should we fear an impoverishment of traditional languages?

As Thurlow (2006, p.676) also noted, statements like "six billion times a day" (seldom given a source) are perfect examples of the kinds of "statistical panic" favoured by journalists and, following Tannen (1989), their function is largely to authenticate the narrative and to legitimate its central claims. In our French-language example from Switzerland (Extract 2.4), we find another well-established conceit: the clichéd metaphor of emojis as an inundation (i.e. 'la déferlante', surge). Through these patently negative allusions, journalists move a step closer to their idée fixe: the deleterious impact of emojis on language, cultural and intelligent life.

Third rhetorical tactic: Linguistic, cultural, and intellectual degradation

In just over a fifth (20.9%) of our dataset we found explicit reference to the deleterious impact of emojis, most specifically with regards cultural, intellectual and especially linguistic decline. In

Extract 2.4, we have already seen a negatively loaded reference to 'appauvrissement' (impoverishment) as well as the invocation of tradition; this same sense of degradation is carried more explicitly in the following extracts:

Extract 2.5

Les emoticônes sont parfois perçus comme un danger pour la langue. Certains voient dans leur usage une régression de la langue. (Le Figaro, France, 7 August 2017)

Emoticons are sometimes perceived as a danger for language. Some people notice in their usage a regression of language.

Extract 2.6

But a number of us older folks, including academics, are more than a little worried about what the popularity of communicating with pictographs is doing to our language and literature. (Huffington Post, USA, 13 August 2015)

In Extract 2.5, we see explicit reference to the danger posed by emojis for language ('un danger pour la langue') and, specifically, the decline of language standards or a so-called linguistic regression ('une régression de la langue') as possible outcomes of this threat. In the same extract, we also witness how journalists often serve as echo chambers for other people's anxieties, even if these are largely anecdotal or made-up sources. Extract 2.6 does much the same thing with its somewhat disingenuous blending of "a number of us older folks" and "academics" (presumably not all of them?). Notably here, we have a repeated concern about the impact of emojis ('pictographs') on language and, specifically, literature. We will take this particular point up again shortly.

It is across these three rhetorical tactics that we sense the broader discursive strategy of "language endangerment" emerging. Things culminate most clearly in the third tactic (i.e. linguistic degradation), but the idea of emojis' language-like qualities and the supposedly unprecedented rise and spread serve to compound the imagined threat. Unlike Thurlow's (2006,

2007) study, therefore, we have a case not of standard language under threat from digital discourse; instead, we find language *in toto* under threat from visual discourse. (Of course, the added moral panic about the impact of digital media continues to undergird everything.) Although the word *language* (in either English or French) is used, it typically collapses speech and writing which we otherwise know to be two very different modes of communicating. This is a matter to which we also return later. With this chapter, we are hoping to offer a useful extension of earlier work by offering not only an up-to-date perspective but also a multilingual one. More importantly, and in keeping with recent discussions by Thurlow (2017), our contribution lies also in the necessary shift from language ideologies to semiotic ideologies. This is where we turn next.

Step 2: Semiotic ideologies in action

Initially coined by Parmentier (1994, p.142), the notion of semiotic ideologies has been made more prominent for language scholars by Keane (2003). It is Keane's lead that we are following here, borrowing also from Thurlow (2017). Put simply, semiotic ideologies are concerned with people's beliefs about signification or meaning-making, and, specifically, issues such as intentionality, agency and arbitrariness. A key point that must also be made about semiotic ideologies is that, like language and media ideologies, they point to wider systems of social differentiation and symbolic authority – what Keane calls "representational economies" – and people's beliefs about meaning-making are always "enmeshed with the dynamics of social value and authority" (p. 415). In other words, the way we talk about meaning-making says a lot about whose ways of making meaning are considered better and whose beliefs about meaning-making are most powerful or influential. This, needless to say, is why it matters what journalists have to say about emojis and their relation to language.

One of Keane's specific concerns is the prevailing notion (in Western cultures) that language is often treated as meaningful, while other ways of communicating (e.g. material culture) are treated as more practical and less sophisticated. In this sense, it is possible to view semiotic

ideologies as being essentially related to questions of multimodality, prompting the following types of questions: What is the relative importance or value of language vis-à-vis other modes of communication? Which modes are thought to "carry" meaning better or more reliably? Which modes of communication – which resources – are given status/authority? What social values (negative or positive) are attached to different modes of communication? Closely related to ideologies of language and media, these other sorts of ideological processes direct us to another way digital discourse can be metadiscursively framed. We see this clearly in the way emojis are depicted in our dataset. We thus return to the third of our rhetorical tactics from above (i.e. linguistic regression) together with some additional examples. In fact, for the sake of demonstrating the multilingual production and circulation of "language endangerment" we will also draw on a convenience sample of illustrative German- and Spanish-language examples from our larger archive.

Extract 2.7

Le Smiley a révolutionné les premières années du numérique. Jusqu'au règne de l'émoji sur le téléphone portable. Son créateur, Nicolas Loufrani, revient sur l'incroyable histoire de ce langage qui a conquis la planète. (Le Figaro, France, 7 August 2017)

The Smiley revolutionized the early years of digital technology. Until the reign of emoji on the mobile phone. Its creator, Nicolas Loufrani, looks back at the incredible history of this language that has conquered the planet.

Extract 2.8

Beherrschen Sie Emoji, die am schnellsten wachsende Sprache der Welt? (Zeit, Germany, 16 March 2017)

Can you master Emoji, the fastest growing language in the world?

Extract 2.9

Emojis, un nuevo lenguaje universal (La Vanguardia, Spain, 28 November 2016)

Emojis, a new universal language

In order to make the claim that emojis are replacing words (see below), different modes of communication must also be rendered somehow equivalent so that one mode (emojis) can substitute for another (words). It is for this reason that emojis are so often depicted as being a distinctive language in and of themselves. In academic, theoretical terms, none of this is technically correct. At the very least, language requires three core features: modality, meaning, and grammar (Cohn 2013, 2016; Jackendoff, 2002). All other modes must follow suite. As Cohn (2013, p.3) suggests, when modes such as sounds, gestures, or images follow "a *structured sequence* [emphasis added] governed by rules that constrain the output – i.e. a grammar – it yields a type of language". For instance, the sequential images of comics form a (type of) language. Although emojis express meaning using visual graphic signs as a modality, research by our colleagues Dürscheid & Siever (2017) show that they lack a grammar. Unlike the visual graphic signs of comics, emojis do not form structured sequences of visual signs, for example. None of which, of course, seems to bother newsmakers who, like many people, tend to use language in its more metaphorical sense – as in "body language" (as we saw above) or "the language of flowers". People combine different modes in their interactions, which demonstrates that "humans are built with *one expressive system* that manifests conceptual information in three complementary modalities, each of which has its own properties and structures" (Cohn 2016, p.3). In sum, combining emojis and words is a natural way of communicating since human interaction is naturally multimodal (e.g. Dresner & Herring, 2010; Siever, 2015; Skovholt et al., 2014). By assuming that semiotic modes are necessarily interchangeable and incompatible, news media discourse misrecognizes the way human communication works.

Having settled on the distinctiveness and putative validity of emojis as a language, newsmakers are better positioned to pursue its antagonistic, colonizing relationship to language. As we say, one of the other common ways language endangerment is produced is through the tactical framing of emojis' dramatic rise and spread. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for the overall framing of threat and, eventually, decline, which we want to discuss is more detail. To start,

though, we want to note how the rise-and-spread rhetorical tactic is organized most obviously through various forms of lexical exaggeration: numerical claim ('six billion times a day'); superlatives ('fastest'), and metaphors of disaster ('la déferlante'). We also find a somewhat warped sense of history; recall "fastest growing language in history" in Extract 2.1 to which we now have 'die am schnellsten wachsende Sprache der Welt' (the fastest growing language in the world) in Extract 2.8. In Extract 2.7, meanwhile, talk of 'l'incroyable histoire' (the incredible history) of emojis is clearly a type of scalar excess. Elsewhere, we also find metaphors of war (e.g. 'invasion') and references to the ubiquitous nature of emojis (e.g. 'across cultures'). In Extract 2.10, we have the same kind of lexical excess ('massivement' – massively) as well as telling evidence for the spread of emojis: their appearance in dictionaries even. Note also the kind of agency given to emojis – their rudely having invited themselves into the dictionaries!

Extract 2.10

Massivement utilisés, ils s'invitent jusque dans le dictionnaire (Le Monde, France, 15 March 2016)

Used massively, they are even inviting themselves into dictionaries

Extract 2.11

Schreiben Sie noch oder emojisieren Sie schon? Über die Bilder, welche die Handysprache erobert haben. (Tagblatt, Switzerland, 15 October 2014)

Are you still writing or are you already emojing? On the images that have conquered mobile language.

Extract 2.12

Es el nuevo lenguaje de las emociones. Los emoticones se apoderan de la propuesta juvenil. (La Prensa, Honduras, 30 August 2016)

It's the new language of emotions. Emoticons have taken control of youth-oriented marketing.

Extract 2.10 is revealing in some key ways. Emojis are not only presented as a powerful – potentially destructive – phenomenon, but also as an agentive process somehow bringing about changes by itself. It is not the users of emojis who are at fault but instead it is emojis that are shown

to be spreading, growing and generally infiltrating our lives. All of which is a typical expression of technological determinism – the belief that technology drives cultural change rather than vice-versa, and that technology dictates communicative or social practice as opposed to being shaped by communicative and social needs or uses. However, although technologies might shape and influence certain uses, their mere existence does not imply a causal relationship between digital media and social changes. Hence, such a deterministic view does not have any basis in fact. Ultimately, people do not question these statements presented as facts; indeed, as Thurlow (2014, p.486) claims about the mediatized depictions of digital discourse, "their credibility is less important than their dramatic, narrative effect". In portraying emojis this way, journalists paint emojis as an undesirable and deleterious enemy. Indeed, in the present dataset, the "value assumption" that emojis are undesirable is triggered by specifications of, for instance, high-scale movement, rapid growth, and attack. Following Fairclough's reasoning (2003, p.57), if emojis are invading us and are uncontrollable due to their non-stop and high-scale growth, then emojis are undesirable. In this case, journalists evaluate one type of digital communication practice as intrusive and invasive – and thus assume it is bad. This creates an effect of moral panic that ultimately explains the negative arguments put forth in regards to the deleterious impacts of emojis: a cultural, intellectual, and linguistic degeneration. But this way of thinking about – and depicting – emojis also encodes a semiotic-ideological belief in the exteriority and thingness of language. It is akin to what Cameron (1990; also 1995, p.5) characterizes as the "organic fallacy" – the mistaken belief that language, like a tree, just grows somehow willy-nilly beyond human control. This sense of (visual) communication gone wild – rampantly spreading – certainly serves the overarching preoccupation with the decline and even replacement of language.

Extract 2.13

With emojis you can send virtual flowers and kisses, so perhaps the question now is, will real language be lost to this new virtual one? (The Guardian, UK, 25 June 2015)

Extract 2.14

Assiste-t-on alors à un appauvrissement de la langue? La chercheuse observe en tout cas un phenomène nouveau par rapport aux premieres emoticônes: aujourd'hui, des emoji remplacent des mots et ne font plus que venir en complément. (Le Matin, Switzerland, 24 April 2015)

Are we thus witnessing an impoverishment of language? The researcher observes in any case a new phenomenon compared to the first emoticons: today, some emojis are replacing words and are not only used as a complement.

Extract 2.15

'Verhunzen die Smileys unsere Sprache?' fragte die Schweiz am Sonntag. Inflationär und gedankenlos eingesetzt, erschweren diese modernen Hieroglyphen bei SMS oder Whatsapp-Mitteilungen das Verständnis, statt die Kommunikation zu vereinfachen. (Tages-Anzeiger, Switzerland, 11 February 2015)

'Are smileys ruining our language?' asks Schweiz am Sonntag. Used excessively and thoughtlessly, these modern hieroglyphics make it hard to understand SMS or Whatsapp messages rather than simplifying communication.

Extract 2.16

Abusar de los 'Emojis': ¿El nuevo enemigo del lenguaje? (Infobae, Argentina, 12 January 2016)
Emoji abuse: The new enemy of language?

Perhaps not surprisingly, Extract 2.13 comes from the same Guardian article as Figure 2.1; with its headline "Emoji invasion: the end of language as we know it :/", the stance of the article is quite unambiguously pessimistic: words are being over-run and "real language" will be overtaken. In other words, language is being replaced. (In effect, we have a circular argument: if there is the possibility of emojis replacing words, then they must be capable of functioning like a fully-fledged language.) In the same way, Extract 2.14 moves swiftly from the potential impoverishment of language by emojis ('un appauvrissement de la langue') to the concern that words are to some extent being replaced ('des emojis remplacent des mots'). Our Spanish-language example makes the case most clearly by invoking the notion of an enemy of language ('enemigo del language) – another agentful misattribution – and by laying the blame, in principle, with emojis or, at least, their uncontrolled use ('abusar de los Emojis' – emoji abuse). As with our German-language example (Extract 2.15), the issues are framed as questions (e.g. 'Verhunzen die Smileys unsere

Sprache?' – Are smileys ruining our language?), but even asking the question raises the possibility, especially when it is flagged in the main headline.

These comments point not only to a simplistic relationship of cause and effect, but also to the belief that emojis and words cannot function together, that they are inherently and/or inevitably incompatible. Indeed, the cause and effect structure (more emojis leads to fewer words) negates the possibility to see *both* the use of emojis rising *and* people continuing writing. The use of emojis might well rise, this does not mean that people will stop writing – or stop knowing how to write. These kinds of comments underscore the deeper concern that emojis (actually the use of emojis) will lead not only to linguistic degradation but also to intellectual and cultural regression. We see this most clearly expressed in the following English-language extracts which refer, respectively, to backwards evolution, a return to ancient hieroglyphics and the end of civilization.

Extract 2.17

We are evolving backwards. Emoji, the visual system of communication that is incredibly popular online, is Britain's fastest-growing language according to Professor Vyv Evans, a linguist at Bangor University. (The Guardian, UK, 27 May 2015)

Extract 2.18

Language and communication classes are incorporated into a school's curriculum to teach students how to use words to tell a story and communicate effectively. If these classes need to incorporate the language and symbols used in the mobile/digital world, aren't we just regressing back to the age of hieroglyphs? (CNBC, USA, 24 June 2015)

Extract 2.19

Some have questioned whether they represent the end of civilisation as we know it. Would Shakespeare turn in his grave if he could see what has become of our language? (Telegraph, UK, 8 August 2016)

These are, of course, all too familiar ways in which digital discourse practices are metadiscursively framed, although for slightly different ends. In his work on the news media's depiction of texting style, Thurlow (2006, p.680) also picked up on references to hieroglyphics; in this case, however,

journalists used the term for exaggerating the distinctiveness and unintelligibility of digital discourse. In Extract 2.18 above, hieroglyphics is being invoked for its supposed "primitiveness" in terms of both its being non-modern and pictographic rather than alphabetic. (Recall from Extract 2.15 the ironic reference to 'moderne Hieroglyphen' – modern hieroglyphs.)

As something of an aside, we note that, in the same article extracted in 2.17, Professor Evans is actually reported as being a lot more circumspect: "People get hot and bothered about good language use, but emoji is not a language,' he says. 'Its job isn't to replace language; it's enhancing our communications." As Thurlow (2006, p.683) has noted before, these otherwise rare moments of nuance are often undermined anyway by the driving narrative and/or concluding remarks of the article.

The over-riding tone or stance of Extracts 2.17, 2.18 and 2.19 is one of pessimism – or what Thurlow (2006) might characterize as moral panic. Emojis are depicted unforgivingly and one-dimensionally as a backward form of communication leading not only to the demise of language but, as a consequence, to intellectual and cultural stultification. This shows that moral panics are not necessarily concerned with emojis and/or digital practices, but that they are often demonstrative of wider concerns regarding social order and social changes, as Critcher (2008) and Buckingham & Jensen (2012) suggest. Here we have a perfect example of recursivity, which, with reference to language ideologies, Irvine & Gal (2000) identify as the often unfounded extrapolation of isolated (iconized) linguistic features or practices to whole new domains of life. The idea here is that any putative linguistic regression is equivalent to intellectual and cultural regression. Through recursivity, people assume that emoji is a "bad" form of communication. Assumptions have the capacity and social power to shape what is accepted as common knowledge (Fairclough, 2003, p.55). As Fairclough notes (2003, p.40), "what is 'said' in a text is 'said' against a background of what is 'unsaid', but taken as given". Here, people assume that emoji-based communication is a negative development and that verbal language is superior. In the extracts above, "regressing back to the age of hieroglyphs" (Extract 2.18) and "evolving backwards" (Extract 2.17) means moving

towards cultural darkness (i.e. a time when images were used to communicate). These comments in turn imply that emojis are "bad" and words are "better". Moreover, this value assumption is connected to another assumption: the belief that there actually exists such a thing as a better/worse communicative mode, and thus that a mode can be inherently good or bad. In this regard, news media discourse hinges on an appeal to a supposed "golden age" when written language (the "good" mode) was at its peak (see Milroy, 1998). This is all a matter of semiotic ideology insofar as language is evidently upheld as the only and/or ideal bearer of culture and vehicle for intelligent expression. Of course, and as we have already seen in Extract 2.7, it is not all language which is regarded in this way. Implicitly or not, we are reminded that written language and particularly literary language are the true markers of culture, intellectual life and civilization. It is for this reason alone that, in true form, the British press turns worriedly to Shakespeare (Extract 2.19) as the ultimate arbiter of good, proper or real language. It is assumed that Shakespeare's time was a golden age with regards to (English) language; therefore, incorporating tiny visual symbols in today's language is perceived as an affront to "good language". In his study, Thurlow (2006, p.679) cites the following 2003 example from his data: "And to think this happened in the land of Shakespeare. If the bard were alive today, he'd probably write, '2B or not 2B'." Over fifteen years later, one could well imagine a journalist somewhere bemoaning the use of something like this:

The kinds of metadiscursive framing we have looked at so far clearly hinge on – and reproduce – a range of well-worn language ideologies (e.g. about standard language) which, in turn, are organized through the usual processes of iconization and erasure – selectively singling out some aspects and ignoring others. (We come to recursivity in a moment.) But our main focus here continues to be on the semiotic ideologies at play; in particular, the apparently irremovable divide

or irresolvable contest between words and images, between language and visual communication. Everything it seems boils down to the issue of mode/modality. Indeed, this is a particular semiotic ideology which Riley (2011) actually chooses to label as a distinctive "modal ideology". (Riley is herself concerned with how cultural beliefs about language acquisition affect language socialization.) It seems that conflicting beliefs about the superiority/inferiority of images and writing are something which play out across the lifespan. In this regard, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.16) comment on the status of images at school; for instance, although pupils are encouraged to draw at school, their illustrations are rarely seen as a means to communicate, unlike words. And as they become older, students focus more and more on writing at the expense of images. Similarly, Cohn (2013, p.3) explains how drawing is usually only viewed as a "skill" compared to writing which is seen as a "rule-governed system". Writing is thus commonly and widely regarded as a sign of progress and culture. This helps to explain the emergence of *language endangerment* and perhaps some of the fierceness with which it is expressed.

Here, the language of the press "misrecognizes" certain semiotic modes as being necessarily *better/worse* than others, highlighting a Manichean and hierarchical vision of modes. Indeed, people actually assume that a mode can be inherently good or bad. This belief is set against the backdrop of prescriptivism, the idea that one code/variety is better than others. Moschonas & Spitzmüller (2010, p.23) define prescriptivism as a corrective practice that follows three steps: prohibitive, normative, and explicative. The authors give the following example of corrective practice: "one should not say or write X – one should say or write Y because X is incorrect and Y is more appropriate" (p.23). According to Moschonas & Spitzmüller (2010, p.25), the explicative step is a value judgment that usually indexes a form of ideology and relies on common assumptions and presuppositions. The explicative step, which is related to ideologies, tends to remain constant over time. Likewise, Cameron (1995, p.1) talks about verbal hygiene as "[p]ractices (…) born of an urge to improve or 'clean up' language". She claims that "our norms and values differ" but "what remains constant is only that we *have* norms and values" (ibid, p.9). In

the above examples, the press highlights a common ideological frame (connected to norms and values) that is indirectly stated: we should use words and not emojis because emojis are bad (they are hindering linguistic and intellectual skills). In this case, the explicative judgment presupposes that there is a norm (words) and that this norm is superior.

As Cameron (1995, p.9) claims, everyone is a prescriptivist, or "verbal hygienist". As a result, we are less interested in the fact that people's comments are normative, and more in how/why discussing good/bad communicative modes actually misrecognizes the nature of human communication. Such a dichotomy is a result of classifications, which is how systems of representation function (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Emojis are portrayed as being an inherently simple code that results in limited thought. In sum, the above examples of recursivity point to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or the idea that the language you use influences your intellectual capacity (Whorf, 1956). Indeed, the press claims that words allow for the development of thought, ideas, arguments, and articulation, which presupposes that emojis do not permit the growth and maturation of cognitive and intellectual skills, as Extract 2.18 exemplifies. Indeed, in Extract 2.18, students need to be taught "how to use words to tell a story and communicate *effectively*" (my emphasis). The concept of recursivity allows us to understand the meaning of the differences between various modes of communication as well as the construction of specific ideologies. Through recursivity, people classify things (i.e. modes) according to "norms", revealing relationships of power, authority, and inequality. In the case at hand, the difference between emojis (shallow communication) and words (deep communication) is extrapolated onto cultural and intellectual levels, forming specific beliefs and attitudes about the nature of communication, where modes have the capacity to be inherently good or bad. However, by assuming that semiotic modes can be intrinsically better or worse than others, news media discourse misrecognizes the way human communication works; people actually have at their disposal different semiotic resources to express a specific meaning, and they choose the mode that they think is the most appropriate (or the "best") to transmit this meaning, depending on different factors.

There is one other point of theory which we would like to offer in the way of explanation. While writing is itself inherently visual (Cohn, 2013; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), it is different from other types of visual discourse because, argues Cohn (2013, p.6), for alphabetic scripts at least it is "based on the correspondence that graphic signs have with sound". This makes is more difficult – in theory and practice – to draw a neat distinction between the written mode and the visual mode, although one might reasonably distinguish between the written mode and the *image* mode. With regards the emojis-and-language relationship, moral panic arises when emojis are perceived to be substituting for words; as such, we do not see a rejection of visual communication in toto. This is how Kress & van Leeuwen (2006, p.17) put it: "the opposition to the emergence of the visual as a full means of representation is not based on an opposition to the visual as such, but on an opposition in situations where it forms an alternative to writing and can therefore be seen as a potential threat to the present dominance of verbal literacy among elite groups". We might argue, therefore, that newsmakers and others are not rejecting image-based communication because it is visual, but because they give more importance to words and writing – and without recognizing that it, too, is a form of visual communication. The relationship between words and images is ultimately constructed as a necessarily competitive one.

Discussion: Misrecognizing communication

> This kind of visual literacy (the "old" visual literacy) has, for centuries now, been one of the most essential achievements and values of Western culture […] No wonder that the move towards a new literacy, based on images and visual design, can come to be seen as a threat, a sign of the decline of culture. (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996, p.15)

More than twenty years ago, Kress & van Leeuwen (quoted above) commented on the rise of visuality and design as powerful – perhaps even dominant – communicative modes in contemporary life. There was, they argued, an ever-growing importance attached to visual literacy but that this shift from conventional, logocentric notions of literacy would inevitably be met with

resistance and anxiety. In many ways, it is precisely this kind of cultural reaction or public backlash that we have been documenting in this chapter. The *language endangerment* is certainly a discourse being played out across the multilingual news-media data. Arguably for the reasons we have just discussed, this seems to be something which has captured the public imagination, fed in no small part by newsmakers. In this regard, and as a way to start wrapping up, we offer the following headlines from more recent data (also archived in the Digital Discourse Database), two stories from more conservative newspapers in the UK from April 2018.

Extract 2.20

Emoji 'are ruining the English language because young people use them to communicate and don't bother with words' (The Daily Mail, UK, 18 April 2018)

Extract 2.21

Emoji 'ruining people's grasp of English' because young rely on them to communicate (The Telegraph, UK, 17 April 2018)

The study being cited in these two stories is, it transpires, concerned with popular perceptions, as the first article explains: "Of the two thousand adults, aged 16 to 65, who were asked their views, 94 per cent reckoned English was in a state of decline, with 80 per cent citing youngsters as the worst offenders." (It is perhaps all the more ironic that the use of "reckoned" in this sentence might well be considered "bad English" by many. For that matter, another pet peeve of grammar police appears with "regressing back" in Extract 2.18.) More to the point, and quite contrary to the driving argument of the headlines and the body of the articles, we also learn the following about the survey's results: "around three-quarters of adults rely on emoji to communicate". It seems that popular beliefs and feelings about emojis are generally quite confused; in the UK at least there certainly seems to be a double-standard about who is to blame for the demise of language. Regardless, the biggest nonsense in this story is the persistent suggestion – by survey participants

and the journalists – that people (young or otherwise) no longer "bother with words" or must now rely exclusively on emojis for communicating.

As wordsmiths, journalists not surprisingly take a very logocentric view of emojis, assuming that words are necessarily superior. Theirs is an inherently ingrained belief that words are likely to be more sophisticated, more reliable bearers of meaning than images. But theirs is also an especially powerful, privileged position from which to reproduce and promote these beliefs. Even in the apparently innocuous act of valuing one mode of communication over another, journalists "have the potential to re-scale social, cultural, and symbolic capital, and thereby 're-shuffle' authority and expertise on particular issues" (Milani & Johnson, 2010, p.6). They are also able to shore up their own authority, using their position as workers-cum-arbiters of language "in the service of the struggle to maintain or acquire power" (Woolard, 1998, p.6). They do so by trying to fix certain semiotic ideologies, making them seem obvious and commonsensical. The media does not merely attempt to mirror reality; it circulates a naturalized, but often distorted version of reality in which certain voices are privileged over others and in ways which often contradict or erase what people are actually doing in their everyday communicative practices.

Emojis are everywhere and consistently portrayed by journalists as inherently simplistic and limited – in Bernstein's (1971) famous terms, this is a seriously "restricted" code – with the implication that they cannot possibly be as meaningful or sensible as words. It is not that we regard newsmakers are necessarily wrong, although they are sometimes clearly making things up. (Note the oddly inconsistent quotations in the two headlines above.) As Cameron (1995, p.9) remarks, everyone is a prescriptivist or "verbal hygienist" of one kind or another – even academic linguists. We are less interested therefore in the inaccuracy and/or normativity of journalists' comments which are sometimes to the point of discriminatory when it comes to young people (again, cf. Thurlow, 2014). It is not for us to confirm or deny the central premise of the language endangerment discourse, even though we may disagree or even disapprove. Rather, we are interested in tracking how "popular" discussions of putatively good or bad modes *misrecognize*

communication in ways which expose underlying semiotic ideologies – that is, dominant cultural discourses about signification and meaning-making. By "misrecognition", we refer to Bourdieu's (1984) sense that something is not recognized for what it truly is but is instead attributed to another realm of meaning (cf. James 2015, p.100). Things are not recognized for what they are because of naturalized assumptions that are deeply ingrained through a set of cultural, social, political processes. Consequently, people are not fully aware of – or willing to entertain – the complex nature of emojis, of language or the functioning of different semiotic modes. Of course, even experts like academics spend a great deal of time trying to figure these things out and arguing between themselves about the nature and relative merits of semiotic actions.

The "language endangerment" discourse we have pointed to here reveals a troubling but not altogether surprising misrecognition of language, visual communication and the inherently multimodal nature of all communication. In short, journalists appear simply unwilling to address the significant difference between semiotic modes – or to challenge the simplistic ways other people speak of these issues. The bottom line, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.19) observe, is that not "everything that can be realized in language can also be realized by means of images, or vice versa". It all depends on the particular affordances of different mode or semiotic resources. More to the point, it seems that most ordinary speakers invariably find ways to express meaning using a combination of different modes; they also understand – intuitively or not – when meaning might be "lost in translation" if the "wrong" mode is used. Likewise, they are aware of the fact that written language is not necessarily the most effective mode in all situations/contexts; this is why their communicative practices require them to choose the mode(s) that they think would express their meaning the best. Human beings have at their disposal different semiotic resources to express a specific meaning, and they choose and use the medium and mode that they think is the most appropriate to transmit that meaning. According to Jay Lemke, verbal language, for instance, is particularly good for classifying and categorizing things into groups (Hestbaek et al., 2015, p.127). Yet, although users select the "best" mode(s) according to the situation, a mode is not intrinsically

good or bad, as the press would lead us to believe. In reality, different semiotic modes can function together (i.e. they *are* compatible) even if they don't necessarily express meaning in the same way (i.e. they are *not* interchangeable).

In other words, news media discourse highlights a misconception of the sign-making process in giving one mode of communication more value than another and in discarding the fact that human communication is naturally multimodal. Newsworkers' semiotic ideology is comprised of a naturalized belief that words are more powerful than images in their capacity to express meaning; in other words, they think that words actually express "better meaning". As a result, the hierarchical relationship between modes (i.e. powerful and good - weak and bad) is taken for granted. However, such a contrast is created in discourse. Indeed, through their language, newsmakers create connections between forms and ideas, and these connections are rarely questioned. They become real and true in the discursive process; therefore, ideological relationships do not simply "exist"; they become naturalized in their performance. Newsmakers create relations of authority and inequality through their discursive acts and beliefs, utilizing "discourse" as a form of social action. It is not just emojis which come off poorly from the news media reporting, therefore, but also everyday speakers themselves who are effectively treated as unwitting or incapable dupes. Perhaps this is how journalists see the rest of us. Perhaps this is how they keep themselves gainfully employed as the great defenders of words.

Chapter 3

"Screens are like crack to children": A multimodal critical discourse analysis of "harm-driven expectations" in the news

Setting the scene: Children and their digital media practices

On May 27th, 2018, the Swiss public television channel, RTS1, broadcast a television report detailing developmental and social issues affecting children today as a result of their overexposure to screens (cf. Sommer, 2018). In the report, speech pathologists and doctors discussed the dangers of digital media use for young children while examining specific cases of children who had developed a variety of health issues such as language delay and motor and communication disorders, and who exhibited behavior similar to that of autistic children. Similarly alarming, in 2017, the British online newspaper, *The Mirror,* went so far as to compare children's use of digital media to drug addiction – and not just to *any* drug, but to crack, a powerful form of cocaine:

Extract 3.1

> And parenting expert Tanith Carey said: "This sounds unhealthy – screens are like crack to children. It might sound radical and free thinking but computers are highly addictive to children." (The Mirror, UK, 2 February 2017)

The RTS TV report and the extract from *The Mirror* are just two recent examples that one finds in today's European mediasphere (i.e. television, newspapers, radio, etc.) which highlight popular beliefs and concerns regarding the (mainly negative) impact that digital media can have on children. These kinds of discourses in the media are imbued with powerful ideologies related to children and technology, particularly what journalists or adults' beliefs are about children and their digital media practices. These beliefs and interpretations are often framed solely around a discourse of risk, a focus that is problematic, misleading, and narrowing, although not terribly surprising, as I argue in this chapter.

Previous research has investigated discourses of risk regarding young people and their digital media practices. Such scholarly work (e.g. boyd, 2014; Buckingham 2007; Haddon & Stald, 2009; Jeffery, 2017; Jones & Schieffelin, 2009; Spilioti, 2015; Ponte et al., 2009; Thurlow, 2006, 2007, 2014; Vickery, 2017) examines the discourse of "moral panic" (cf. Buckingham & Jensen, 2012; Critcher, 2008) that the press employs to frame young people's digital media practices as dangerous and destructive as opposed to offering a balanced discussion between risks and opportunities. Indeed, when it comes to reviewing young people's digital skills, the press tends to take a technologically deterministic position which often ends up portraying young people as incompetent and vulnerable in the face of the threat digital technologies pose. However, as some scholars (e.g. Buckingham & Jensen, 2012; Critcher, 2008; Thurlow 2014) have noted, the panic regarding young people's digital media use and practices is not necessarily about the users themselves, but often reflects other broader sociocultural issues, such as a fear of modernity and of social changes (Buckingham & Jensen, 2012). While most empirical work on the subject has investigated linguistic data, multimodal data is also ideologically revealing in regards to young people and their digital media use (see Thurlow et al., 2019), which is the approach I take in this chapter.

Importantly, I take into account a new wave of concerns that has emerged in the media, as more and more toddlers and young children have gained access to digital media. As the RTS

television report mentioned earlier and Extract 3.1 demonstrates, and as Blum-Ross & Livingstone (2016) contend in their report, media comments often focus solely on the health effects that digital media supposedly have on children. Indeed, "Reports about screen time in the popular media frequently link screen time to adverse effects on physical and mental health, for example that screen time makes children 'over-stimulated', 'moody, crazy and lazy', 'cross-eyed' and 'obese'" (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016, p. 7). As I show in my analysis, these types of comments related to health issues are more and more present in today's mediasphere, and tell us much about underlying societal ideologies. Although I am aware that investigating discourses of moral panic with regards to young people's digital media use is not new, and that the same popular anxieties tend to recur with the arrival of each new technology (Buckingham & Jensen, 2012), my goal here is to shed new light on journalists' framing of the issue, from a multimodal *and* multilingual perspective. Moreover, I wish to offer new insights into metadiscourse about *young* children's digital media use, which is a demographic that has been less studied. In this way, I also expand on previous work (e.g. Thurlow, 2006, 2007, 2014, and also Thurlow et al., 2019) that focuses on teens.

Early moral panic discourses concerning children's access to the internet started in the 1990s and emphasized a disconnect between the "real" offline world and the "unreal" virtual world, and also between children (who were viewed as "digital natives") and parents (who were viewed as "digital immigrants") (Facer, 2012; Livingstone et al., 2018; Prensky, 2001). Consequently, as Facer (2012) suggests, such discourses challenged the old "parent-child" model that viewed parents as experts and children as learners, and shaped a new understanding of "childhood" that ran contrary to the notion that children belong in the "safe" private space of their home. In other words, the arrival of the internet shook up the old understanding of "parenthood" and "childhood", as children started to get involved in the "public" space, which was previously thought to be reserved for adults (Facer, 2012; Lupton, 1995; Lee, 2001). It was the challenging of these old beliefs that brought about discourses of moral panic (Facer, 2012). When

discussing these early moral panics and anxieties, Lupton (1995, p.110) claimed: "the home is now no longer a place of safety and refuge for children, the computer no longer simply an educational tool or source of entertainment but is the possible site of children's corruption. 'Outside' danger is brought 'inside', into the very heart of the home, via the Internet". Early moral panic discourses about children's digital media highlighted an idea of "childhood" tied to geographical space (and more specifically to "private space"); such an ideology tied children to certain characteristics such as passivity and vulnerability (Facer, 2012; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James & Prout, 1997; Lee, 2001). While early research on childhood focused on "biologically reductionist approaches" (James & Prout, 1997, p.xi), the field quickly moved to encompass a more social constructionist perspective, where notions such as "child" and "childhood" were thought to be discursively produced (Burman, 1994; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James & Prout, 1997; Jenks, 1996; Stainton-Rogers & Stainton-Rogers, 1992). Meanwhile, research about children and their digital media use also evolved so as to focus on children's perspectives and the potential benefits of digital media, and started taking into account the agency of children as social actors; this social constructionist approach was used to counter moral panic discourses (Buckingham & Jensen, 2012; Livingstone et al., 2018).

In this regard, current empirical research on children's relationships with digital media proposes a perspective oriented towards the opportunities and benefits that digital media offer. For instance, the *EU Kids Online* is an example of an ongoing multinational and multidisciplinary research project based at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), which seeks to investigate the risks, opportunities, and online practices of children in different European countries (see Livingstone, 2014, for an overview of methods and findings, and Livingstone et al., 2018, for a historical overview of European research on children's digital media use, and an outline of the research agendas of the *EU Kids Online* project). The project's goal is to provide cutting-edge European research (published in peer-reviewed journals) in order to foster awareness of our children's digital media practices, and thus to collaborate with policy-makers so that they

can use these empirical findings in the development of their guidelines and policies. As Livingstone et al. (2018, p.3) note, empirical research is especially useful in order to counter the discourse of moral panic found in the media – a discourse that can in turn strongly influence policy-makers into making decisions that focus on online risks, safety, and restrictions at the expense of online benefits and opportunities. In fact, empirical research on children's digital media use does not justify the common fears and anxieties found in the media; rather, it presents children as actors who are capable of taking advantage of the opportunities of the digital world while at the same time dealing responsibly with the risks that they may encounter online (Livingstone et al., 2018). Thus, such research focuses on "opportunity-driven expectations" (cf. Vickery, 2017) that can eventually help children become media literate and thus facilitate their participation in a world that is more digitally connected than ever before. Moreover, there is now a desire to investigate the effects of digital media on children "in terms of [children's] embodied, located and social as well as online selves" – in other words, from a holistic perspective (Livingstone et al., 2018, p.10). Such a perspective contends that while research should still focus on the variables that influence children (e.g. demographic, social, and cultural factors), it should also examine the effects that the digital world can have on children's well being, and thus hear what children have to say. All in all, as Livingstone et al. (2018, p.12) argue, future research should venture to "recognize children's agency, to contextualize their internet use in particular countries or contexts of childhood, to keep both risks and opportunities in view and to recognize the interconnections, to design research and policy that respects children's lives holistically, and to eschew moral panics in favour of the contribution of rigorous theory and evidence". In alignment with Livingstone's (2018) directives, some important empirical studies do focus on children's points of view and discuss the influence that public anxieties can have on children. For example, Mascheroni et al. (2014) analyze children's response to the discourse of "moral panic" in the news media and show that children's perceptions of risks and dangers are highly influenced by what they see/hear in the news, especially in regards to the dangers related to meeting strangers online. Likewise, Vickery (2017,

p.7) seeks to understand "how expectations shape the everyday "lived experiences" of actual youth" and thus explores young people's responses to risk discourses. These studies show that children's perceptions about "digital media" and "risk" are discursively constructed.

Likewise, ideas about "childhood" and "space" are discursively produced. As Holloway & Valentine (2000, p.778) note, "the discursive construction of children as innocent is informing an understanding of cyberspace as an inherently risky space for children, a space where they are in need of protection". However, every child does not necessarily experience the risks posed by digital media in the same way. While being exposed to risk is a part of children's lives, their resilience to risk depends on a wide range of factors, as research demonstrates (e.g. Luthar, 2006; Masten et al., 1990; Rutter, 1999). Indeed, Luthar & Cicchetti (2000, p.858) define 'resilience' as "a dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma". As Smith & Carlson (1997, p.236) claim, "many, or even most, children exposed to risk do no go on to negative outcomes and instead are "resilient", that is, able to overcome developmental hazards and adversity without apparent negative outcome". Therefore, children do not all respond the same to online risks, and mere exposure to risk does not necessarily lead to harm (e.g. Vandoninck et al., 2012). While modern conceptions of "risk" focus mainly on potential negative outcomes, "[b]efore the era of modernity, [risk] was a neutral term, concerned merely with probabilities, with losses and gains", as Fox (1999, p.12) claims (see also Lupton, 1999b; Douglas, 1992). In this chapter, I follow Vickery's (2017, p.7) standpoint concerning the concept of "risk" in order to analyze it "from a social constructivist perspective that is focused less on objectively identifying the probability of harms and dangers than on understanding how society identifies, mediates, and constructs understandings of what is considered to be a risk". Although the press has a tendency to conflate the concepts of "risk" and "harm" by implying that all risk automatically leads to harm, it is important to understand that these are actually distinct terms. A risk *can* lead to harm, but it can also lead to benefits, a perspective which is not found enough in the media, as I demonstrate. Rather, the news media

exposes what Vickery (2017, p.8) calls "harm-driven expectations", which "are revealed through policies, practices, and narratives that are based on fear and anxiety". As I show in my analysis, these "harm-driven expectations" – or ideologies of harm, as I sometimes refer to them in this chapter – in turn influence the way journalists think about what should be done when giving advice and recommendations to readers (Vickery, 2017). Indeed, their advice and recommendations frequently espouse a rhetoric of abstinence which favors restriction, surveillance, and prohibition. In other words, "Harm-driven expectations rationalize restrictive policies, intuitions, and practices that try to control technology" (Vickery, 2017, p.8).

With the above research agenda in mind, I now wish to shed new light on news media discourse related to children's digital media practices. In the current chapter, I show that the same "harm-driven expectations" (cf. Vickery, 2017) circulate across national and linguistic borders, both verbally and visually, and I reveal the impact of such "media ideologies" (cf. Gershon, 2010) through the way journalists and other news editors frame and understand the concepts of "children" and "childhood" with regard to digital media. I understand the news media's ideologies of harm (or "harm-driven expectations") as being part of the broader concept of "media ideologies" which Gershon (2010c, p.283) defines as "the metalanguage that emphasizes the technology or bodies through which we communicate". In keeping with the above theoretical background, this chapter addresses the following research questions:

1. How are the concepts of risk and harm represented in recent news stories about children's digital media use?
2. What kinds of advice and recommendations do the news media offer to combat such risks?
3. What are some of the recurrent semiotic resources employed in images representing children with digital media?
4. What do "harm-driven expectations" reveal about journalists' understanding of "children"?

Ultimately, I hope that this chapter contributes to current debates regarding children's digital

media use and practices and that it demonstrates the need to counter the misconceptions circulating in international news outlets in favor of a more balanced approach.

Research design

In this chapter, I investigate the news media's framing of children's digital media use and practices. As a reminder, I have decided to focus on "children" for two main reasons. First, I noticed that the words "children" and "enfants" were frequent nouns in the English and French datasets (see Appendix F). Second, while other studies have focused primarily on the representation of teens in linguistic narratives (e.g. Thurlow, 2006, 2007, 2014) and in visual narratives (e.g. Thurlow, 2017; Thurlow et al., 2019), few have investigated the depiction of *younger* children's digital media use in the news. In the news media, the term "children" is frequently used to refer to different age categories, from toddlers to teenagers – a phenomenon that can also be seen in empirical research. Indeed, researchers often use the general terms "child(ren)" to refer to their participants. Consequently, the use of the word "child(ren)" aligns with what Van den Bulck et al. (2016) asserted when they stated that "the concept of "child" […] refers to the position of a person in a family's constellation, not to a developmental stage" (p.31). For example, in the *EU Kids Online* studies, the age of children can vary from 0 to 19, and thus the studies include research on babies and toddlers, young children, adolescents, and young adults, depending on the purposes of the investigation. Although most research has been conducted with children from 9 to 16 years of age (e.g. Livingstone et al., 2011), new studies have focused on children under the age of 9, as more and more younger children gain access to digital media. As a result, Chaudron (2015) and Holloway et al. (2013) focus on the age group 0-8 in order to examine very young children's digital media practices, risks and opportunities, as well as the role of their parents and caregivers. Consequently, by focusing on "children" in my linguistic analysis, I capture a whole range of age groups, including young children. In my visual analysis, my focus on young children allows me to

expand on previous work by Thurlow (2017) and Thurlow et al. (2019) which focus on the visual representation of young people's digital media practices.

Step 1: Linguistic narratives

In this chapter, I draw on a sample of 137 different news stories between 2014 and 2017 (51 English-language news stories, 17 French-language news stories, and 69 German-language news stories) which are all drawn from the DDD (see Appendix G for a list of the sources of the137 news stories). For the current dataset, I first selected all stories published between January 2014 and September 2017. All 1325 articles (193 French-language, 717 English-language, and 415 German-language news stories) from the DDD were then imported into *AntConc* (see Chapter 2 which utilizes a similar analytical approach). In this way, I started with three corpora – one in French, one in English, and one in German – and used the concordance tool in order to focus on keywords and their semantic clusters. I searched Antconc for all instances of child* in English (843 occurrences) and enfant* in French (316 occurrences), and a student assistant helped me gather German-language data and searched for all instances of Kind* in German (205 occurrences). Given my interest in children's digital media use and practices, we then sub-sampled further so as to only attend to news stories that specifically discussed children's digital media practices and/or the impact of digital media on children. We were left with 86 French-language instances, 168 English-language instances, and 130 German-language instances of stories which focused specifically on the relation between children and their digital media use – altogether a total of 384 distinctive lines of data.

My goal here is not to offer a quantitative study of popular anxieties with regards to children's digital media practices, but rather to analyze *how* news stories discuss the same issue across borders, and the ideological implications that follow. Therefore, as Thurlow's (2006, p.671) study, this chapter relies on an " interpretive, critical approach that highlights striking themes rather than statistical patterns". Since previous studies (e.g. Jeffery, 2017; Mascheroni et al., 2014;

Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Thurlow, 2006, 2014, 2017) have discussed how the press often frames young people's digital practices in terms of *harmful* outcomes, my analysis expands on these previous studies by including Vickery's (2017) conceptualization of "harm-driven expectations". Vickery states that "[t]he mere threat of individual harm – that is, the risk itself – serves as justification for fear-based policies, decisions, and practices" (Vickery, 2017, p.8). This embodies a rhetoric of "problem-solution" (cf. Machin & van Leeuwen, 2003) where risks are seen as a problem, to which solutions such as policies must be established. Machin & van Leeuwen (2003) see this "problem-solution discourse schema" as a "dominant mode of constructing the world of the *Cosmopolitan* woman" (p.507). In this chapter, I demonstrate how different news stories employ this rhetoric of "problem-solution" and the ideological impact of such a rhetoric by investigating "typical" examples of the ways in which international news stories frame children's digital media use.

Step 2: Visual narratives

In this section, I analyze news media images in order to demonstrate how ideologies of harm are realized multimodally. The seven examples that I look at here come from a dataset of 33 images of young children with digital devices (see Appendix H for a montage of these images) and serve as "typical" representations of how the news media depicts children's digital media practices. The first step of the data selection was to search the image tags "smartphone", "computer/laptop", and "tablet" – which are tags of digital devices – from the DDD; I thus gathered a total of 269 images of smartphones, laptops, and tablets. The second step was to discard images that did not portray people; I thus only kept 214 images of people with digital devices. Finally, the third step was to focus on images portraying children between 0 and 12 years old (n=33) that come from 24 different news stories. I give a rather wide age range since it is impossible to determine the exact age of the represented participants, but associating them with a wider age group is relatively feasible.

In this chapter, I offer a social semiotic analysis (e.g. van Leeuwen, 2005) of seven typical images of young children's digital media use and focus on the images' three metafunctions: representational, interpersonal, and compositional (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). I thus investigate how the semiotic signs of the news media images attempt to represent reality (i.e. representational metafunction), how they create social relations between participants (i.e. interpersonal metafunction), and how they form a coherent whole (i.e. compositional metafunction). I draw on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design, Machin's (2007) multimodal framework and Barthes's (1977) analysis of carriers of connotation. Furthermore, I provide some comparative analysis on the visual representations of young children and teenagers. In this regard, my study aligns with Thurlow et al. (2019) and their visual analysis of teens and technology in image banks. To my knowledge, no other study has focused on the visual representation of younger children and digital media; this is why I focus my social semiotic analysis on visual examples from this age group. Here, I do not offer a visual content analysis of the images because the dataset of news media images of younger children and digital media is rather small (n= 33). I am therefore less interested in the number of images than *how* they are composed.

All in all, the social semiotic analysis of the news media images reveals a specific type of cultural discourse related to children and digital media, which circulates beyond modes and beyond borders. These images – together with their headlines, leads, and captions – communicate a specific discourse of childhood, of what it is to be a child, and more specifically, a child using technology; they depict children as innocent victims of evil new technology.

Analysis: Identifying "harm-driven expectations"

Step 1: Linguistic narratives

In this section, I show how "harm-driven expectations" (cf. Vickery, 2017) are discursively produced by analyzing typical news media examples from the three datasets in French, English, and German. Examples in French and German are translated into English for comprehensibility; unfortunately they cannot always capture the full meaning and nuance of the original version. Here, I focus on a discourse of "problem-solution" (see Machin & van Leeuwen, 2003), which, I argue, reveals journalists' ideologies about children's digital media practices. Specifically, I explore the ways in which digital media is commonly described as the cause of many health-related issues, and then how this fabricated problem in turn justifies abstinence-focused solutions. The extracts I analyze below were gathered using Antconc, which gave me a total of 384 distinctive lines of data (see above). These extracts are not necessarily representative of the entire dataset, but they were selected because they are typical of the ways in which the news media portrays children's digital media habits (see Thurlow, 2006).

1. Identifying problems

When the news media discusses how the use of digital media has negative effects, they utilize two problematic framings that create an atmosphere of moral panic. First, they describe all risk as automatically leading to harm, and second, they tend to solely focus on health-related consequences when it comes to children's digital media use. The conflating of the concepts of risk and harm can be seen in Extract 3.2 below, which comes from the British newspaper, *The Telegraph*. The news article introduces Elisabeth Kilbey – a clinical psychologist – and her opinion on the dangers of new technologies for children.

Extract 3.2

Kilbey's clarion call for change could not come soon enough. Just this week the National Association of Head Teachers revealed that alarming numbers of four year olds are starting school this week unable to speak properly because language is delayed. The British Heart Foundation has reported that sedentary children who amuse themselves online are with all the attendant risks. And a 2015 poll carried out for Channel 4 News found that 43 per cent of parents believed their children were 'emotionally dependent' on technology. Many reported that attempts to restrict usage were met with hostility and sometimes aggression. Screen time – games and social media affirmation-stimulates the reward centres in young brains which makes kids crave ever more hits, hence some commentators have taken to using the term 'digital heroin'.

(The Telegraph, UK, 7 September 2017)

Although scholars highlight the importance of distinguishing risk from harm – a risk does not necessarily lead to harm, but *can* lead to harm; it is the "probability of harm" (Livingstone et al., 2018, p.5) – the last sentence of the extract (lines 8 to 10) demonstrates how the news media does not make such a distinction. Digital media (i.e. games and social media in Extract 3.2) are considered risky because they *could* have negative effects depending on certain factors (e.g. personal and demographic characteristics, and context of use). However, here, the addictive potential – which is compared to heroin addiction – is described as if it were a direct consequence of 'screen time' (line 7), and more specifically, of 'games and social media affirmation' (line 8). In other words, digital media use is portrayed here as an unredeemable risk. This exemplifies a misunderstanding of the relationship between risks and harm, and more importantly, an erasure of other influential factors. Indeed, no details are given concerning the children's digital media usage (where, when, how, how much), that is, the nature of the children's use of digital media, which could lead to risks or opportunities. Although the extract mentions 'screen time' (line 7), there is no reference to the exact amount of time spent playing games or on social media. Thus, it is implied here that *any* amount of time spent online (on games or social media) necessarily leads to addiction, which creates a simplistic and misleading discourse meant to strike fear into the reader as it comes off as exaggeratedly alarming. As Blum-Ross & Livingstone (2016, p.4) suggest, popular comments should stop focusing on "screen time" (the quantity of time spent online); rather, they should take into consideration the context of use, the content of digital media, and the

connections/relationships that are made possible or not. In sum, by conflating risk and harm, the press reveals their understanding of risk, and as such, demonstrates that risk is a social construction (cf. Lupton, 1999). Here, the press constructs an idea of risk solely based on harm-driven fears while omitting the possibility of encountering risks that do not lead to harm or that may even lead to opportunities and benefits. In such a discourse, the news media portrays "all risk as unacceptable" (Livingstone, 2009, p.174).

The focus on risks and harm and the conflating of both concepts creates a discourse of "moral panic", which should come as no surprise when one considers previous scholarly work investigating news media discourse concerning young people's digital media practices (e.g. Thurlow, 2006, 2014). In Extract 3.2, the discourse of moral panic is constructed through various rhetorical means. First, journalists employ a rhetoric of persuasion through the barrage of three different sources: The National Association of Head Teachers (line 2), The British Heart Foundation (line 4), and Channel 4 News (line 5). These sources all point to the same alarming issues regarding the dangers of digital media use for children. Listing three different sources one after the other has a persuasive function, just as providing numbers and statistics serves the same persuasive function (e.g. Thurlow, 2006). The reader assumes that if multiple sources point to the same conclusion, then the alarming discourse in the article must be warranted. Although the three sources are completely unrelated, "stuffing" or "cramming" them this way has the striking effect of an escalating danger. Besides for a rhetoric of persuasion, the extract utilizes words that trigger panic because of their negative connotations: 'alarming' (line 2), 'delayed' (line 3), 'risks' (line 5), 'hostility' (line 7), 'aggression' (line 7), 'emotionally dependent' (line 6), and 'digital heroin' (lines 9-10). Readers are thus presented with a metaphorical picture where digital technologies are dangerous tools that delay kids' language development, that render them aggressive like criminals, and dependent/addicted like drug addicts.

In a similar vein, Extract 3.3 from the German newspaper *Die Zeit* exposes a misunderstanding of what risks are and when they can lead to harm, which also serves to create an atmosphere of moral panic meant to scare the reader.

Extract 3.3

"Wer viel drinnen vor dem PC sitzt oder in der Ecke mit seinem Gameboy oder Smartphone beschaftigt ist, bewegt sich weniger. Haltungsfehler, Kopfschmerzen, Nervositat, Ruhelosigkeit, Schlafstorungen konnen die Folge sein. Kurzsichtigkeit hat bei unseren Kindern deutlich zugenommen. Dann haben wir die psychische Gefahrdung. Abhangigkeit ist eine Gefahr, PC-Spiele bergen einen hohen Suchtfaktor. Hiervon fuhlen sich besonders die Jungs angezogen. Madchen werden eher kommunikationssuchtig und sind per Facebook, WhatsApp oder Twitter auf Daurempfang. Beides wirkt sich in der Regel negativ auf die Schulnoten aus. Mobbing in den sozialen Medien ist ebenfalls ein Thema."

(Die Zeit, Germany, 20 October 2016)

Whoever spends a lot of time in front of a computer or is busy with their Gameboy or Smartphone in a corner will move less. This can result in postural disorders, headaches, nervousness, restlessness, and sleep disturbances. Myopia has increased significantly in our children. Then we have the mental hazards. Dependence is a danger; computer games carry a high addiction factor. These are particularly attractive to boys. Girls are more communication-dependant and are always available on Facebook, WhatsApp or Twitter. Both usually have a negative effect on school grades. Bullying on social media is also an issue.

Here, spending a lot (line 1: 'viel') of time in front of a computer, a Gameboy, or a smartphone is described as a direct cause of the multiple ills presented. Consequently, the listing of problems resulting from an overexposure to screens (lines 2-3) has a persuasive effect which triggers a feeling of moral panic. The panic effect is all the more dramatic because of the collapsing of different health-related problems, form physical troubles (e.g. line 2: 'Kopfschmerzen' –headaches; line 3: 'Kurzichtigkeit' –myopia) to behavioral ones (e.g. line 3: 'Schlafstörungen' –sleep disturbances) and psychological ones (e.g. line 4: 'Abhangigkeit' –dependence; line 8: 'Mobbing' –bullying). As illustrated in Extract 3.2, "cramming" different information without further detail creates the illusion of a danger. Here, impacting the reader emotionally is more important than reporting facts. Furthermore, besides causing health-related problems, computer games and social media – referred to as "both" (line 7: 'Beides') – are described as usually having a negative effect on school grades (line 7). This shows again that journalists do not distinguish risk from harm; indeed, they

present digital media as having a negative impact on people, without providing any contextual information about usage. However, if there were a distinction between risks and harms in both Extracts 3.2 and 3.3, the framing of children's digital media practices would be less dramatic since it would take into account influential other influences that *could* lead to harm or not. Once again, the news media's framing emphasizes a social constructivist approach to risk. In this particular news media context, risk is framed in a way that recognizes a determinacy of digital media use in relation to negative consequences (i.e. harms). However, in order to accurately and objectively assess the potential harm and benefits of online experiences, it is essential to hear what children have to say about the way in which they cope with risky situations online (see Vandoninck & d'Haenens, 2014 for a mapping of preventive measures children take), which is not a perspective that the press offers. As a result, children are depicted in news media discourse as passive victims of harmful technology, and not as the agents that they actually are in the digital world. [18]

The non-agency of children can also be observed when one considers how it is the technologies themselves that get blamed as the main causes of a variety of health-related problems. In a technologically deterministic way, French-speaking news writers often blame 'écrans' (screens) and other material devices such as 'smartphones' (smartphones) and 'tablettes' (tablets) for causing problems. In the English-language data, the same technologies are blamed as well as 'screen time'. Extracts 3.4 and 3.5 below both illustrate the naming of different digital media (in bold) as the causes of multiple health issues.

Extract 3.4

One of the best actions to protect young people's mental health (Editorial, 22 September) is to ban **mobile phones** in schools. Progressive schools have already done so, recognising the relentless impact that **social media** and **screen time** have on the emotional and mental health of their students.

(The Guardian, UK, 26 September 2017)

Extract 3.5

1 Nous recevons de très jeunes enfants stimulés principalement par les **écrans**, qui, à 3 ans, ne
2 nous regardent pas quand on s'adresse a eux, n'écoutent pas les consignes, ne communiquent
3 pas, ne recherchent pas les autres, sont très agités ou très passifs

(Le Monde, France, 28 June 2017)

We receive very young children mainly stimulated by screens who, by the age of 3,
do not look at us when we talk to them, do not listen to instructions, do not communicate,
do not look for others, are very agitated and passive

When news writers blame screens or the time spent in front of screens for children's health issues, they victimize children by not giving them agency for their actions. As both extracts above demonstrate, children are passive victims of what "screen time" and "screens" (both agents) do to them. Furthermore, what is particularly striking in Extract 3.4 is the collapsing of totally different "technologies" as if they were all the same. Indeed, 'social media' (i.e. the content of internet in the form of a website or application) and 'screen time' (i.e. the time spent in front of a screen) (line 3) are two different "risks" of digital media that can have negative (or positive) outcomes. However, this is confusing for readers because the news writer claims that in order to 'protect young people's mental health' (line 1), schools should ban 'mobile phones' (line 2). Is it the mobile phone in itself (i.e. the material device), the content or application/website used online (i.e. social media), or the amount of time spent online that is to blame? As I stated earlier, news writers have a tendency to pack unrelated items together in order to produce a more striking and dramatic effect. Nevertheless, journalists miss what is truly important when it comes to the impact that digital media can have on children; it is not so much the materiality of the technology in itself, mere exposure to screens (i.e. screen time), or access to certain content online that is harmful, but a mix of different factors such as personal and demographic characteristics, context of use, family structure (e.g. Blum-Ross & Livingstone; 2016; Livingstone et al., 2018) that are usually not exposed in news media discourse. As I expose below in the semiotic analysis of news media images, the same issue can be found when digital devices (i.e. the "material" aspect of technology) are placed in the forefront of the blame game; thus images too miss what is really significant in the

relationship between children and digital media.

The next problematic framing with regards to children and their digital media use has to do with a single-minded focus on health consequences, a resultant blind reliance on health specialists at the expense of all other experts. Although Extract 3.2 (lines 3, 6, 7, 9, 10) and Extract 3.3 (lines 2, 3) illustrate this point quite well, I would like to offer other examples. For instance, Extract 3.6 below from the Swiss-French newspaper *La Tribune de Genève* compares the consequences of children's overexposure to screens as similar to symptoms of autism (line 3) – which echoes the exaggerated comparison to heroin addiction from Extract 3.2; the consequences are as serious as can possibly be imagined.

Extract 3.6

1 La surexposition numérique engendre une kyrielle de maux. Quel que soit le milieu social, ces
2 spécialistes décrivent des enfants qui ne se développent pas normalement: ils ne parlent pas, ne
3 communiquent pas, se montrent très agités ou à l'inverse passifs. Des troubles proches, selon les
4 auteurs, des symptômes de l'autisme –à la difference majeure qu'ils disparaissent en supprimant
5 les écrans.

(La Tribune de Genève, Switzerland, 26 August 2017)

Digital overexposure causes a never-ending string of woes. Whatever the social background, these specialists describe children who do not develop normally: they don't speak, don't communicate, get very agitated or inversely, passive. Disorders that are close, according to the authors, to symptoms of autism –with the exception that they disappear when screens are gone.

Here, journalists implicitly demonize autism, implying that it is an abnormal condition and that children who are overexposed to screens will not develop normally (line 2: 'normalement'). To make the situation even more dramatic, it is implied that *all* children are affected, *even* children from affluent backgrounds (line 1: 'quel que soit le milieu social' –whatever the social background). Moreover, overexposure to screens does not just cause woes; it causes 'une kyrielle de maux' (a never-ending string of woes/pains), which sounds more alarming. The listing of developmental and linguistic woes (lines 2-3) mirrors the typical portrayal of autism in the news media. As Holton et al. (2014, p.200) demonstrate, "journalists rely heavily on labels and psychiatric symptoms when

covering autism". As a consequence, they treat "autism as a generally poor outcome that is potentially harmful at the societal level. This suggests to the public that individuals with autism should be avoided when possible because, if nothing else, they are not "normal" and are connected with a certain amount of negativity" (Holton et al., 2014, p. 201). The popular framing of autism in the media and in society in general is transposed here onto the consequences of digital overexposure, which in turn reinforces the sentiment of fear and panic. Also, in order to convince readers more forcefully, the article relies on the opinion of health professionals, which is a powerful rhetorical tactic. Indeed, the "specialists" (line 2: 'spécialistes') and "authors" (line 4: 'auteurs') are health professionals who are referred to earlier in the news article as pediatricians, child psychiatrists, psychologists, and speech pathologists. People usually trust health professionals, thus what they say here is to be taken as fact. In sum, the implicit message is the following: if autism is a condition that should be avoided, so should symptoms related to digital overexposure. Therefore, as the last sentence of the extract (lines 4-5) suggests, the cure for the "disease" is simply to eliminate the use of digital devices altogether.

As Extracts 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 demonstrate, the press never questions these health-focused statements, which are presented as facts. As Thurlow (2014, p.486) claims about the mediatized depictions of digital discourse, "their credibility is less important than their dramatic, narrative effect". The resultant moral panic ultimately explains the press's focus on risks and harms (especially centered around health) related to digital media use, and also actual users and readers' opinions (see focus group analysis in chapter 6). Such a strong focus on health issues by the news media can be explained by the rise of health researchers in the field of media and children (Bickham et al., 2016). Furthermore, the opinions of pediatricians can be extremely influential since they "[play] a direct role in guiding parents to optimize the physical, mental, and social development of their children" (Bickham et al., 2016, p.186). The news media has a tendency to follow medical specialists and cite work from medical journals as opposed to other journals which are more oriented towards communication, sociology, or cultural studies; as a

result, news media discourse often frames children's digital practices "within an illness framework, tilting it towards investigating negative effects of media" (Bickham et al., 2016, p.192), as we can see in the examples above, and in Extract 3.7 below.

Extract 3.7

For children that young, the official line from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is that exposure to screens arrests language development and social skills. Until recently, the APP advised that for children under two, parents should permit absolutely no screen time whatsoever. In October last year, reflecting popular usage, it revised the wording of this advice, so that "avoid all screens under age two" became "avoid solo media use in this age group".

(The Guardian, UK, 10 August 2017)

Extract 3.7 comes from the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, and references the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) recommendations. This extract relies on medical sources to convince readers and win parents' trust, however, it actually misrepresents what its sources originally said. The original AAP article referenced by *The Guardian* does not state that 'exposure to screens arrests language development and social skills', as Extract 3.7 states (line 2). Rather, the AAP article states:

Extract 3.8

Population-based studies continue to show associations between excessive television viewing in early childhood and cognitive, language, and social/emotional delays, likely secondary to decreases in parent-child interaction when the television is on and poorer family functioning in households with high media use.

(AAP Council on Communications and Media, 2016, p.2)

Besides mentioning influential factors such as quantity of media consumption (line 1: 'excessive'), quality of parent-child interaction (line 3: 'decreases in parent-child interaction') and quality of family functioning (line 3: 'poorer family functioning'), the article goes on to discuss the influence of other crucial factors such as the age of children when they first have access to media, and the content of the medium (e.g. violent, educational, etc.). As a result, the idea that *The Guardian*

presents omits crucial information with regards to what factors *could* lead to developmental issues in children and thus conveys a distorted message that implies that the mere 'exposure to screens arrests language development' (cf. Extract 3.7). Moreover, the last sentence of Extract 3.7 is also misrepresented. It is indeed true that the AAP article advises to 'avoid solo media use in this age group' (cf. Extract 3.7 and AAP Council on Communications and Media, 2016, p.3). However, the framing of Extract 3.7 centers on a negative framework that emphasizes restricting digital media use (e.g. line 5: 'avoid'). But what the original AAP article states is more positive and balanced. Indeed, they tell parents: 'if you want to introduce digital media, choose high-quality programming and use media together with your child. Avoid solo media use in this age group' (p.3), advice which is less alarmist and more instructive for parents. Even though The Guardian article misrepresents the original AAP article, people tend to trust medical sources. So why should they doubt what they read in the press? Unfortunately, such news media examples only serve to feed people's fear and panic regarding children's digital media consumption and prevent them from devising a reasonable approach to the risks and opportunities inherent in digital media.

In addition, relying solely upon medical claims can be misleading for the public. In the previous examples, we see a simplistic and deceitful discourse that creates a dichotomy between "healthy" vs. "sick" (Bickham et al., 2016, p.192) transposed onto a similar dichotomous relationship between "no technology" (healthy) and "technology" (sick). Such a simplistic dichotomy might help to explain comments that imply or directly recommend getting rid of technology. In sum, this almost exclusive reliance on medical research in news media discourse has a double effect: it does not allow other empirical studies on media and children to be heard (e.g. *EU Kids Online*), and it misleads the public (especially children and parents) into adopting a mindset of moral panic that is unwarranted when one takes into account the valuable work being done in other disciplines. As suggested by Bickham et al. (2016), research on children and the media could benefit greatly from more collaborative and interdisciplinary work. Medical scholars and media/social/communication scholars could engage each other in order to promote children's

wellbeing while accepting the fact that we live in a world where the use of digital devices is not necessarily negative.

In sum, news media discourse on the risks and harmful effects of digital media on children reveals two problematic framings that create a perspective of moral panic. First, risks are described as automatically leading to harm, which scares readers and convinces them that the only available solution is to get rid of the cause of the harm (i.e. digital media). However, in such a discourse, people are not made aware of where the blame actually lies, that is, influential factors such as the context of use and access (e.g. where, when, how much, with whom), the content of digital media, and the child's demographic and personal characteristics. These are the issues to look out for and to monitor, not our screens, computers, tablets, smartphones, games, or apps in and of themselves. Second, the press tends to focus on health issues with regards to children's digital media practices. Such an emphasis on medical problems is also misleading since it creates an atmosphere of moral panic that ignores other empirical work which offers different perspectives on the effects of digital media on children. Moreover, when the press mentions medical publications or medical claims, it does not take into account a major challenge that medical researchers face: "the need to translate results of individual studies into actionable recommendations" (Bickham et al, 2016, p.196). We often see references in the press to special cases and individual stories that can mislead parents. This is why interdisciplinary collaboration between medical and non-medical researchers is valuable, and why the news media ought to turn to other empirical research when discussing children's relationship with digital media. When it does not, news media discourse on the risks and harmful effects of digital media on children eventually shapes a discourse of childhood/children that is misleadingly limiting.

2. Identifying solutions

Next, I investigate the guidelines and recommendations that the news media proposes to readers. The solutions that they present in their news stories are mostly based on "harm-driven

expectations" (cf. Vickery, 2017), and they also tend to follow a negative framework since they mostly center on prohibition or restriction (e.g. the emphasis on *avoid* in Extract 3.7). I argue that this type of framing centered on restriction and prohibition is a direct consequence of the portrayal of the health-related problems exposed above. Ultimately, I focus on one problematic issue of the press's discourse of advice and recommendations: the misleading expectation that parents are active agents and children are passive recipients.

Extract 3.9 below comes from the Swiss French newspaper, *Le Temps*, and discusses parents' strategies for coping with their children's digital media use.

Extract 3.9

D'autres choisissent de couper le Wi-Fi à partir d'une certaine heure. Et ceux qui comptent sur solutions techniques: filtres parentaux ou logiciels de captures d'écran à intervalles automatiques. Ceux qui délimitent des plages horaires: jamais le matin avant l'école, ou jamais le soir avant de dormir. Ceux qui délimitent des espaces physiques: pas de téléphone à table, ni dans les chambres à coucher, les écrans uniquement dans les pièces communes. Beaucoup accordent un 'crédit écran', qui va croissant avec l'âge de l'enfant, par exemple une demi-heure deux fois par semaine.

(Le Temps, Switzerland, 31 January 2015)

Others choose to cut off Wifi after a certain hour. And those who rely on technical solutions: parental filters or automatic screenshots taken at regular intervals. Those who delimit certain time slots: never in the morning or before school, or never at night before going to bed. Those who set physical spaces: no phone at the table, nor in the bedrooms, screens only in communal rooms. Many grant a 'screen credit' that increases with the child's age, for example a half an hour twice a week.

Here, we notice the construction of a cultural narrative centered on surveillance and restriction through the use of: 'couper' (line 1: cut off), 'filtres parentaux' (line 2: parental filters), 'délimitent' (lines 3,4: delimit), 'jamais' (2x line 3: never), and 'crédit écran' (line 6: screen credit). In this example, the solution that the news media proposes to parents relies solely on restricting, checking, and prohibiting children's digital media use and practices, which creates a negative framework of abstinence that ultimately influences readers into adopting an all or nothing approach, where the use of digital media is seen as inherently bad, and the non-use of digital media is seen as inherently

good. The following extract below from the German newspaper *Die Welt* contains a similar discourse that also favors abstinence from digital media.

Extract 3.10

Der "digital divide" wird also künftig nicht smarte Nutzer und dumme Nichtnutzer trennen, sondern umgekehrt: diejenigen, die als Datensklaven an ihren Endgeräten hängen, und die, denen ihre Eltern die Endgeräte verbieten, ihnen Bücher vorlesen und Zeitungsabonnements schenken. "Die Grossmeister im Silicon Valley wissen das schon längst", schreibt der Politikwissenschaftler Andre Wilkens in seinem Buch "Analog ist das neu Bio": Ihre Kinder schicken sie auf analoge Schulen ohne Smartboards und Laptops, sondern mit Kopfrechnen und Basteln.

(Die Welt, Germany, 29 October 2016)

The "digital divide" will no longer separate smart users from stupid non-users, but rather vice versa: those who depend on their devices as data slaves from those whose parents prohibit digital devices, read them books, and give newspaper subscriptions. "The Grand Masters in Silicon Valley have known this for a long time", writes political scientist Andre Wilkens in his book "Analogue is the New Organic": Send your children to analogue schools without Smartboards and laptops, but with mental arithmetic and crafts.

Through the words 'verbieten' (line 3: prohibit) and 'ohne' (line 6: without), Extract 3.10 also emphasizes the prohibition and restriction of digital media. Moreover, by portraying digital media users as dependent slaves (line 2: 'Datensklaven') and non-users as children who must have parents who prohibit digital devices (line 3: 'Engeräte verbieten'*)*, read books to their kids (line 3: 'ihnen Bücher vorlesen'), and offer them newspaper subscriptions (line 3-4: 'Zeitungsabonnements schenken'), journalists indirectly tell parents that they should forbid their children from using digital media which will make them stupid and dependent. The reverse is also true. It is implied that children will be more intelligent if they do not use digital devices. Such a discourse based on a dichotomy between "no digital media" (smart) and "digital media" (stupid) is similar to the illness framework exposed earlier between healthy and sick. All of these examples utilize the same rhetoric of moral panic which relies heavily on dichotomies that do not leave any room for discussion. As a consequence, parents are portrayed as active agents who need to protect their

children by prohibiting and monitoring their digital media use, while children are viewed as passive and voiceless recipients of their parents' measures.

The problem with framing parents as police officers is that this can prevent children from learning and taking advantage of the benefits of digital media. Rather, parents/caregivers should be seen as "guides". With regards to parental mediation and recommendations, empirical research looks for successful ways for parents to *guide* their children and *engage* with them, in a more positive framework. Prohibiting, restricting, and constantly monitoring will not help any child become media-literate. Indeed, although restrictive measures can prevent children from accessing risky content online, they do not allow children to acquire any digital media skills at all (Livingstone et al., 2017; Vickery, 2017; Warren, 2016; Zaman & Nouwen, 2016) – something they would be able to learn through active mediation or discussions with their parents, for example. Moreover, a focus on surveillance can further "privacy concerns and may erode the relationship of trust between parents and children", as Sun Sun Lim (2016, p.25) notes. Consequently, the rhetoric that many news articles promote is not beneficial for parent-child relationships or for the future of children in a digital world. Instead of protecting children from harm when arguing for a zero-risk childhood, restrictive measures strengthen the barriers between parents and children in ways that could be detrimental to children in the future. Indeed, as a consequence of such measures, children may be deprived of skills that would allow them to both be actors in the digital world and be well-equipped to cope with risks online.

Furthermore, in news media articles that favor supervision and restriction, children are framed as voiceless and vulnerable victims. Therefore, the news media produces a particular discourse of "childhood" by framing children as "subjects" (see e.g. Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James & Prout, 1997). Such a discourse does not address "children's rights to provide for their needs or participate in the (digital) world" (Zaman & Nouwen, 2016, p.5) and goes against empirical research which views children as actors. For instance, Van den Bulck et al. (2016) argue against the traditional unidirectional framework, which considers parents as actors socializing their

children and children as passive recipients of their parents' rules. Rather, they argue in favor of the "child-effect" theory, a bidirectional socialization process where parents can also become recipients ready to be socialized, and children can be actors who influence their parents. In this way, parents are also learners and thus, as Zaman and Nouwen (2016, p.7) suggest, "it is important to move beyond the presupposition of the parent as protector and the (all-knowing) teacher". However, as I have demonstrated in Extracts 3.9 and 3.10, the news media's framing of the parent-child relationship is rather simplistic and unidirectional: children are depicted as passive recipients of rules and recommendations, and parents are portrayed as responsible actors who must teach and protect their children (by restricting, monitoring, and prohibiting). As Warren (2016, p.179) claims, "Effective mediation is more than just building fences, and parents will always want to be better informed about their children's media choices". Therefore, as the above extracts demonstrate, news media discourse is not the best place for parents to seek for effective ways to guide and engage with their children; instead, the news media fosters moral panic and tells parents that constantly monitoring their children is a safe practice. As research shows (e.g. Livingstone et al., 2017), restrictive measures concerning children's digital media use tend to be adopted by fearful and less digitally skilled parents. Since the news media has a tendency to spread fear and panic, this can have a significant impact on parents' mediation's style and direct them towards restrictive-mediation as opposed to enabling-mediation. Although parents can obtain useful and constructive advice from other influential sources, the press remains a powerful starting point for the discussion of social issues; this is why it is so important to improve news media discourse by offering a more balanced perspective which could allow for more balanced recommendations for parents of digital media users.

In sum, the problem-solution rhetoric that I have analyzed here leads to the construction of a particular discourse of "childhood" built on specific ideas of "space" and "risk". Not only does the notion of "space" shape people's understanding of "children", but ideas about childhood and children also shape the meaning and use of particular spaces, as Holloway & Valentine (2000)

argue. More precisely, the press portrays the digital space as risky for children, and children as vulnerable and passive. This closely aligns with Holloway & Valentine (2000, p.777) who claim: "the understanding of children as angels, as innocents who are less competent than adults, has led to concerns about children's safety in public space". As a consequence, the authors argue that "[t]his is leading parents to control and limit their little angels' independent use of public space" (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p.777; see also Valentine 1997a, 1997b). Ultimately, it is the social construction of these discourses that is problematic because they shape people's ideas and use of digital media in terms of danger and restriction. This then leads to a redefining of public space and who should be allowed to use it.

Step 2: Visual narratives

Below are seven visual examples of young children and digital media that I selected because they are typical of the ways in which the press visually depicts children's digital media practices. In order to demonstrate how ideologies of harm are produced visually, I selected two images from French-language news, three from English-language news, and two from German-language news. Although I will not spend too much time discussing the sources of the images selected, it is nonetheless important to mention the increasing use of stock images by news editors, and as such the complex relationship between image banks and the news media (see Aiello & Woodhouse, 2016; and Thurlow et al., 2019 for a critical discussion of visual economies and ideologies).

Figure 3.1: Beobachter, Switzerland, 22 August 2014. Original headline: *Meine Jungs sind so passiv* (My kids are so passive). Original image caption: *Noch vor ein paar Jahren waren Tablett-Computer kein Thema, heute sind sie gar in vielen Kinderzimmern zu finden* (A few years ago tablets had not become an issue yet, today they can even be found in a lot of children's bedrooms) (Image source: Thinkstock Kollektion)

Figure 3.2: Tages-Anzeiger, Switzerland, 21 May 2017. Original headline: *Wie Whiskey für kleine Kinder* (Like Whiskey for young kids). Original image caption: *Gerade für Kinder haben Smartphones ein gewisses Suchtpotenzial.* (Smartphones have a certain addictive potential, especially for children). (Image source: Keystone)

Figure 3.3: Le Monde, France, 28 June 2017. Original headline: *Ecrans, la grande déconnexion parents-bébés* (Screens, the big disconnect between parents-babies). Original image caption: *Smartphone ou tablette font aujourd'hui bien souvent fonction de tétine.* (Today smartphones or tablets serve the same function as pacifiers). (Image source: Divergence).

Figure 3.4: Le Matin, Switzerland, 3 July 2017. Original headline: *Alerte aux écrans pour les enfants en bas âge* (Young children should be wary of screens) Original image caption: *Pour les spécialistes, les enfants de moins de 4 ans ne devraient pas se retrouver devant un écran plus d'une heure par jour.* (According to specialists, children under 4 years old should not spend more than one hour a day in front of a screen). (Image source: Stocklib)

Figure 3.5: The Guardian, UK, 2 March 2016. Original headline: *How Silicon Valley's parents keep their children safe online.* Original image caption: C*hild psychologist Richard Freed says children as young as 11 are becoming hooked on pornography. Technology, he believes, pulls children away from their most developmentally important places: family and school* (Image source: Alamy)

Figure 3.6: The Mirror, UK, 6 October 2016. Original headline: *The secret cyber-life of 10 year olds: Children admit to actively hiding their online activity from parents.* Original image caption: *A ten year old boy uses an Apple Ipad tablet computer* (Image source: Getty Image)

Figure 3.7: The Telegraph, UK, 4 May 2017. Original headline: *Tablets and smartphones damage toddlers' speech development.* Original image caption: *Children under 18 months should not be given handheld devices* (Image source: Alamy)

In this section, I demonstrate how harm-driven ideologies can also be realized visually through the three "metafunctions" of communication. I thus explore how images represent the world (i.e. representational metafunction), how they create relationships between participants (i.e. interpersonal metafunction), and how they form a coherent whole (i.e. compositional metafunction) (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

1. Representational meanings

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), images can either be narrative or conceptual in their way of representing the world and the relationships between the represented participants. If they are narrative, they usually depict "unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements", and if they are conceptual, they focus on "participants in terms of their *generalized* and more or less *stable* and *timeless essence* [emphasis added]" (p.79). The visual examples above – all of which come from image banks – are best described as conceptual. As Machin and

van Leeuwen (2007, p.151) argue, the strong reliance on stock images on a global level nowadays (including in the news media industry) shows a significant shift in the "world's visual language from one which emphasised the photograph as witness, as record of reality, to one which emphasises photography as a symbolic system". As one notices in the images selected, they are typical of stock photography; their generic and symbolic nature is such that we could easily swap them and each news story would keep its core message. More specifically, their generic and symbolic nature is revealed through the lack of contextualization, which makes them more conceptual than narrative. This also aligns with what Thurlow et al. (2019) argued in their analysis of the visual representation of teens and technology in image banks. The lack of background and/or details in these images leads viewers to focus their attention on what little they can see and on the connotations of the few visible/salient objects. Therefore, these images do not *tell* a specific story, they rather *symbolize* an idea – here, the idea of what it is to be a child using technology.

The images above depict one or two children staring at a digital device (a smartphone or a tablet) alone. The combination of these two participants (child + digital device) is symbolically powerful. Although such images show "typical" and "generic" participants who could easily be interchangeable, and although stock images such as Getty images are intended to be "meaningless" in order to be used in any context (cf. Machin and van Leeuwen, 2007, p.151), these images acquire a specific meaning when one considers them from a multimodal perspective, that is, with the linguistic text that surrounds them. Whereas children usually represent innocence, vulnerability and purity, smartphones and tablets are seen here as disrupting or spoiling children's innocent nature (e.g. Buckingham & Jensen, 2012). Smartphones and tablets are recurrent props in stock photography and can have different connotations depending on the context (e.g. work, business). Here, it is the *dangerous* nature of these digital devices that is made salient through the relationship between text and images. Indeed, images either highlight the negative headlines and image captions transmitted verbally (e.g. Figures 3.3 and 3.5 – children looking downwards in a dark room) or are rather contradictory (e.g. Figures 3.1 and 3.4 – children smiling/playing); in the

latter case, it is the discordance between negative headlines and "happy" images that makes digital devices seem all the more sinister; they are the ones disrupting children's innocence, in a technologically deterministic way. Although there is not necessarily a direct connection between the headline and the image – as is often the case (cf. Thurlow et al. 2019) – the contrast between the two is nonetheless meaningful; it can highlight children's innocence and their unawareness of any danger, and as such emphasize the need to protect them.

Furthermore, the fact that these children are depicted alone, without adult supervision, increases the element of danger bestowed upon the smartphone or tablet. Whereas empirical research (e.g. Zaman & Nouwen, 2016) underscores the importance of adult supervision and guidance when it comes to young children's use of digital media, the news media presents a totally different picture which emphasizes children's lack of adult supervision and solitude. In any case, the digital device (i.e. the smartphone or tablet) is understood as corrupting children's innocence; as such, readers/viewers come to believe that children must be protected from these devices. In images portraying teens and digital devices, it is not the presence or lack of adult supervision that matters, but rather whether there is "intergenerational contact"; and as Thurlow et al. (2019, p.14) show, " 'teens and technology' is thereby seldom conceived in terms of intergenerational contact or familial settings".

In sum, the representational meanings in these news media images regarding children and technology are quite powerful conceptually. It is quite relevant to distinguish younger children from teenagers in the way they are visually represented; indeed, both kinds of images reveal different cultural discourses. Whereas digital media is often seen as a de-socializing tool in images of teens and technology (cf. Thurlow et al., 2019), it is rather seen as a corrupter of innocence in images of younger children (e.g. Buckingham & Jensen, 2012). In both cases, we are dealing with harm-driven ideologies.

2. Interpersonal meanings

On a social and interpersonal level, the images selected also portray harm-driven ideologies. First, the represented participants (i.e. the children) do not address the viewer directly; consequently, these are "offer" images as opposed to "demand" images, according to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) definitions. In "offer" images, the viewer is "subject of the look, and the represented participant is the object of the viewer's dispassionate scrutiny" (p.119). However, in the visual examples above, the viewer (i.e. the knowledgeable adult) is an actor and the represented participant (i.e. the clueless child) is a passive recipient of the viewer's look. Although the examples selected highlight a detached scrutiny through the participants' gaze (see also Thurlow et al., 2019), the viewer is nonetheless brought into the child's intimate sphere through the choice of frame. Figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6, are all close shots that suggest "close personal distance" where one would be able to touch the other person (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124). Although Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.7 depict a greater social distance, the viewer still has a feeling of being in the children's intimate sphere or with them in the same room. Perhaps such a feeling arises because young children such as these should be in the presence of an adult when using digital media. In both cases (close and further social distance), it is as though the viewer observes the children through a caregiver's eye, that is, from the perspective of someone who is socially close to these children. In sum, the size of the frame of the visual examples and the fact that the children are depicted alone gives us the impression that the participants represented could be *our* children, which strengthens the desire to protect them. As in Thurlow et al.'s (2019, p.17) study and their theory of the "double-disconnect", the represented participants are "shown isolated from each other as well as being always isolated from (mostly adult) viewers". The viewer may feel connected to the children shown in the images, but these children are not connected to the viewer. Rather, they are focused on something else altogether: digital devices (see Thurlow, 2017; Thurlow et al., 2019)

Colors and other modality markers are other semiotic resources that provoke an emotional response from the viewer. In Figures 3.2, 3.4, and 3.7, the scale of color differentiation is rather low, gearing more towards monochrome images with their light, soft and pastel colors. Here, color coordination emphasizes the fact that these images are staged (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2007, p.157). Also, the blank background of these images creates a feeling of pureness, which highlights the children's innocence and unawareness. Figures 3.3, 3.5, and 3.6 are different and have a high degree of illumination (i.e. play of light and shadow) where the very dark background contrasts with the children's faces which are lit up by the digital devices. In an almost creepy manner, the phone reveals – through its vibrant light – the child's unhappy facial expression. Here, rather than conveying a feeling of lightness, softness, and innocence, these images look ominous and underscore the danger of digital devices. These are very evocative images that emphasize the sinister nature of digital media. The pitch-dark room further emphasizes the loneliness of the child, but also fear since children are often afraid of the dark. Thus, the kind of environment depicted in Figures 3.3, 3.5, and 3.6 is not reassuring; it is because of the high degree of illumination that the intensity of the images' emotional response is revealed. These children look as if they are doing something they should not be doing, and worse, they are doing it alone, unsupervised (see Thurlow, 2017, and Thurlow et al., 2019). Consequently, we, as viewers, feel for these children and want to *protect* their innocence (e.g. Figure 3.4) and *save* them from any visible danger (e.g. Figure 3.5).

3. Compositional meanings

As I will contend, the composition of the seven visual examples also plays a role in producing an ideology of harm, and closely mirrors what Thurlow (2017) and Thurlow et al. (2019) argued regarding the portrayal of teens with digital media. The *salience* of participants and objects is an important compositional characteristic and is quite relevant here. I already showed that light from the screens illuminates the children's faces in Figures 3.3, 3.5, and 3.6. It is their unhappy faces

that are made salient here, and as such, this creates an unsettling feeling. More importantly, the digital device itself is made salient in all of these images. Since there is no detailed background and the images only show few participants, the viewer is led to focus his/her attention on what he/she can see and on the connotations of the few visible/salient objects: the child and the digital device (see Thurlow 2017; Thurlow et al., 2019). Furthermore, the smartphone or tablet is made visible because it is the target of the children's gaze and also because of its color, shape, and size. In Figures 3.3 and 3.4, the prominence of the smartphone is such that it even partially hides the children's faces. It is as if the digital device "erases" the child because of its importance. Regarding the *framing* in each image, there is a sense of belonging; the device looks as though it is connected to the child and is part of the child (see Thurlow 2017). Indeed, there is no empty space between the child's body and the device. Therefore, the salience (i.e. importance) of the device and the fact that it is represented as if it were a part of the child makes it all the more dangerous. As Thurlow (2017) and Thurlow et al. (2019) argue, this focus on the material object arises from the concept of *materiality* (cf. Gershon, 2010), the notion that the focus on the physicality of a particular technology affects people's ideologies about the medium. Such a focus on materiality is ideologically significant, especially when one also considers the linguistic text surrounding the images, which often blame "smartphones", "tablets", or "screens" of harmful consequences, as I explained in the linguistic analysis. These ideologies of harm in turn justify any fear and desire to protect children by getting rid of the "material", that is, digital devices. However, by visually (and linguistically) focusing on digital devices as the main cause of multiple ills, these images miss what is important regarding the relationship between children and digital media and the different factors (e.g. demographic, social, cultural, contextual) that can have an impact (positive or negative) on children.

Discussion: The discursive construction of a "risk-free" childhood

In this chapter, I have shown how journalists and news editors visually and linguistically frame the relationship between children and digital media as one of inherent risk and harm that necessitates surveillance and prohibition. Indeed, we see in the news media's framing of risks and harm the *erasure* (cf. Irvine and Gal, 2000) of digital media's benefits, a language ideological process that intersects with media ideologies (see also Thurlow, 2017). The linguistic and visual narratives about children and digital media exclude crucial information from their stories or representations. As such, news media discourse presents problematic and narrowing cultural discourses about children and their digital media use. Furthermore, the news media's framing of risk – through narratives based on moral panic – leads to media ideologies that are harm-driven. In turn, these ideologies of harm justify a social prescription centered on surveillance and restriction, in the name of children's safety. Ultimately, these mediatized discourses are problematic on two different levels; it deceptively constructs (1) childhood as risk-free, and (2) children as a homogenized group who are voiceless, passive, and vulnerable.

First, news media discourse shapes an understanding of children and digital media by implying that childhood is or should be risk-free (Kehily, 2010; Livingstone, 2013). Such an ideology fosters fear and anxiety, which helps to explain discourses constructed around the desire to avoid *all* risk (e.g. Vickery, 2017). As Livingstone (2009, p.174) notes, "media panics effectively construe all risk as unacceptable". However, the social construction of childhood as risk-free is deceiving because risk is part of childhood; it is thus unrealistic to try to create a completely risk-free environment for kids. Also, trying to avoid *all* risk "will, paradoxically, exacerbate rather than reduce the very vulnerabilities it seeks to protect by undermining the development of resilience" (Livingstone, 2013, p.24). Taking risks is part of children's development into becoming independent and autonomous beings. Although it is true that taking risks may lead to negative outcomes, risk taking may also have positive effects, which is why risk-avoidance discourses and

practices deprive children of the chance to access all of the opportunities and benefits that digital media offer. The ways in which the concept of risk is constructed and mobilized in news media discourse – both verbally and visually – creates an idealized concept of childhood, where children need constant protection and supervision. However, the protective measures suggested by the media are problematic; their focus on restriction, prohibition, and surveillance becomes naturalized in discourse and in turn intensifies parents' feelings and desire to protect their children from all evil (see Vickery, 2017). Monitoring children at all times has already become a trend in modern Western society, and this practice is becoming normalized (Barron, 2014; Rooney, 2010). However, as Barron (2014, p.401) suggests, "Children are not passive recipients of parental surveillance and power, rather they are increasingly playing an active role in negotiation with parents and actively resist monitoring of their everyday lives to both make meaning anew and produce culture". Thus, there is a gap between journalists' expectations of children and their digital media practices, and what children actually do. However, although children may be more active and rebellious than the press would have us believe, the danger of depriving children of online opportunities and benefits is exacerbated through risk-avoidance discourses and practices.

Secondly, children are problematically homogenized in the press. When discussing "children", journalists often universalize them by omitting personal and demographic details, which would help to personalize and differentiate children. Such details are crucial since they can be influential risk factors (e.g. Smahel et al., 2014). As a consequence, readers are led to believe that all children, when overexposed to screens, will suffer devastating consequences. This universalization is also constructed visually through the use of typical stock images, which are inherently impersonal and universal since they can be employed for multiple different purposes, and through the erasure of race and class differences. Although I did not discuss these "problematic intersectionalities at work" (Thurlow et al., 2019, p.14) in this chapter, it is something that Thurlow et al. (2019) remarked in their analysis of news media and stock images of teens and digital media. As the authors argue, discourses of childhood are inherently gendered,

raced, and classed into a homogenous ideal (i.e. female, white, and middle class). Moreover, although empirical research has been trying to "[move] away from universalizing assumptions (the 'child', 'internet use')" (Livingstone et al., 2018, p.5) while putting a new emphasis on children's perspectives and background, the media's discourse of moral panic continues to frame all children in the same way: as defenseless and voiceless victims. In images representing children with digital devices, all the "transmitters of meaning" (i.e. objects, colors, participants, setting) create an identity for these children; they tell us who they are, what kind of children they are. More precisely, they constrain them in a very specific role: children are vulnerable because of digital media (i.e. the material). However, children are not only vulnerable because of the technology itself, but also because they are left alone with such a dangerous device, without adult supervision. Children are portrayed here as passive, innocent and unwitting victims of digital media, and digital media is portrayed as corrupting children's innocence. As Smahel et al. (2014, p.233) show in their analysis of young people's responses to online risks, their experiences are "interconnected with the developmental contexts of peer relationships, parent-child relationships, romantic relationships, school, sexuality, identity, health, and morality". The authors highlight the importance of not homogenizing "children" since they all come from different backgrounds and have distinctive experiences that can influence their online practices. Therefore, giving a voice to children is crucial since it would allow us to "recognize the vital indeterminacy between evidence of risk […] and evidence of harm" (Livingstone et al., 2018, p.7). If children were individualized as opposed to homogenized in news media discourse, readers would be made aware of what factors *could* actually lead to harm, and as such, not *all* children would be considered vulnerable and passive. However, the press does not let readers "hear" children's voices, even though research has already begun exploring children's own perspectives as well as their active role and participation, and their rights (e.g. Livingstone, 2016; Mascheroni et al. 2014; Vickery, 2017).

In sum, through a social constructivist approach of risk, I have demonstrated how the concept of risk is constructed and negotiated in news discourse, and what ideological consequences

such a framing can have. Through typical examples, I have shown how news discourse problematically portrays childhood as if it is or should be completely risk-free; this, in turn, shapes an understanding of children as a homogeneous group of passive, vulnerable beings. Therefore, "childhood" is a concept that is itself socially and discursively produced in news discourse (e.g. Burman, 1994; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James & Prout, 1997; Jenks, 1996; Stainton-Rogers & Stainton-Rogers, 1992). It is with this in mind that I offer the following image (Figure 3.8) from *Time* magazine, which encapsulates the ideas discussed in this chapter. [19]

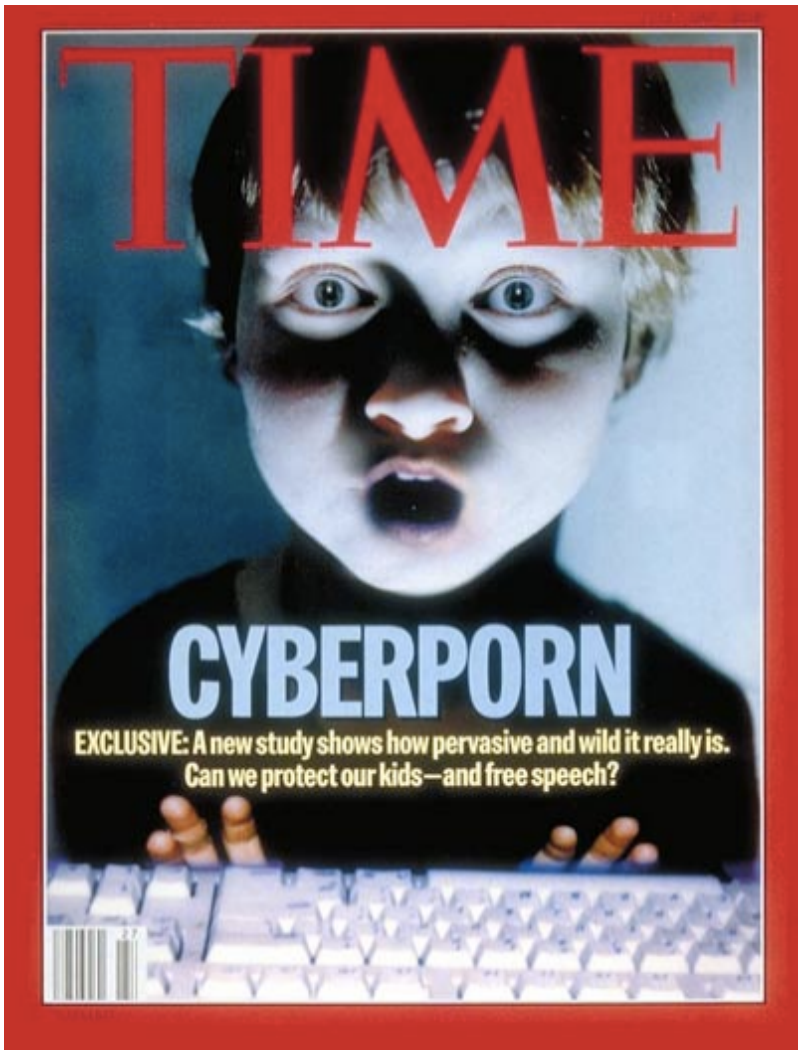

Figure 3.8: Cover page of the *Time* magazine (3 July 1995)

Figure 3.8 comes from the 1995 issue of *Time* and depicts an innocent child faced with one of the more sinister aspects of new technology. As in the images analyzed in this chapter, the "interpersonal meaning" of Figure 3.8 (e.g. the illumination of the shocked face of the child) shows that there is a long precedent for moral panics and mediatized "scare tactics".

While the same ideologies circulate multimodally across national, linguistic (and historical) borders, it is essential to emphasize why such misleading conceptions are problematic. Not only do they have implications for children themselves, but also for parents and caregivers. Although parents and adults in general have a responsibility to protect children, certain measures are better than others, particularly ones based on rational argument and proven research. Protecting children does not equal creating a totally risk-free environment. We need to find a way to both protect children from potential harms that they may encounter online and allow them to become media literate. Such a perspective is already being investigated in empirical research (e.g. Livingstone et al., 2018; Vickery, 2017). But, unfortunately, the press does not take into account all the valuable work being done on children and their digital media use. If policy-makers can collaborate with researchers – as can be seen in the project *EU Kids Online* – why cannot journalists and news editors also take a more objective stance from empirical research? In doing so, their expectations and ideologies would be different and more "opportunity-driven" (cf. Vickery, 2017), and audiences would be represented differently. People would be more likely to trust children to participate in this technologically advanced society, which would allow them to learn how to cope with risk in a responsible way while at the same time benefiting from the positive opportunities offered by digital media.

Chapter 4

From salads to phones: The representation of women/girls' digital media practices – a social semiotic analysis

Setting the scene: Gender and technology

Although we live in an era where women are being celebrated for their achievements and where "sexism" and "feminism" are considered outdated terms (Lazar, 2014), feminist media scholarship goes against such a "postfeminist" ideology and reminds us that women's situation and the media's depiction of them remains very similar to Tuchman's (1978) concept of "symbolic annihilation" to describe the ways in which women were represented in the media. Two recent edited volumes (Cerqueira et al., 2016; Harp et al., 2018) provide a current overview of feminist and media theories, methodological approaches, and research. Their goal is to "theorize about the status of women and the nature of gender in mediated messages and practices" (Bachmann et al., 2018), to explore relations of power, and expose ideologically significant patriarchal discourses in media, among other goals. One research arena that is particularly significant today concerns activism and strategies of resistance in order to promote social change. For instance, the recent #MeToo movement highlights a "trend of the public's willingness to engage with *resistance* and *challenges* to sexism, patriarchy, and other forms of oppression via feminist uptake of digital communication" (Mendes et al., 2018, p.236-237). Chen et al. (2018) has also explored the potential of women's

voices through digital media and how women can become empowered in the digital world. Therefore, feminist discourse is not only found in academic work, but also in online public platforms such as social media, where women's use of digital media offers them the opportunity and power to produce change in today's society, as other studies have demonstrated (e.g. Dixon, 2014; Keller et al., 2018; Thrift, 2014).

However, in contrast to the active role that women have taken in regards to digital media, the press continues to frame the relationship between women/girls and digital media in unfavorable terms. Women are no longer viewed as the agents of change of the #MeToo movement; they are shown as passive users of digital devices who must be protected from the dangers of the digital world. Although research on women's digital media use and practices has seen the potential of digital media as a safe space for women that can allow them to express their voices and to produce social change (e.g. Mendes et al., 2018; Kanai & Dobson, 2016), news media discourse often frames women/girls and their relationship with new media around a discourse of moral panic and risk – especially regarding the sexual content of digital media. For instance, contemporary scholarly debates (e.g. Jeffery, 2017; Renold et al., 2015; Ringrose et al., 2013; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015; Thurlow, 2017) shed a critical light on popular discourses of risk and moral panic surrounding teens and especially girls, their sexualization, and their digital media practices. As Thurlow (2017, p.13) notes, there is a "never fully explained representation of sexting as somehow a decidedly female practice (or issue)"; in turn, such cultural discourses conceptualize young women and girls as vulnerable and in danger. The news media's portrayal of women's digital media practices reinforces the notion that women are not competent actors in the world, and that they need protecting. As Vickery (2014) demonstrates, media discourses of risk surrounding girls and their new media practices have led to increased (normalized) parental surveillance. In response to such media discourses of moral panic and risk, scholars such as Ringrose & Eriksson Barajas (2011), and Jackson & Vares (2015) argue against an exploration of gender and new media around the sole framework of risk. Rather, they argue in favor of a binary

in which risks *as well as* opportunities are explored. However, more often than not, the picture painted by the press is not one where the opportunities provided by digital media are explored; rather it is one where women are at risk and in need of protection.

Furthermore, images in the news media tend to portray women in a way that does not reflect the contemporary realities of their life, often resorting to traditional "stereotyping" as a means of fixing hegemonic definitions of femininity (and masculinity). Stereotypes are a means of reducing the complexity of the individual to a few simplistic characteristics, and in so doing, they fix and naturalize difference (Hall, 1997, p.258). The way women are represented in the media today still tends to marginalize, sexualize, objectify, and dehumanize them (e.g. Collins, 2011; Jia et al., 2016; Landreth Grau & Zotos, 2016). Recent studies have shown that women tend to be underrepresented (i.e. quantitatively) (e.g. Berkers et al., 2016; Shor et al., 2015) and unequally portrayed (i.e. qualitatively) (e.g. Jia et al., 2016) in the media. For instance, regarding stereotypes, Collins's (2011, p.290) meta-analysis of 19 articles from the journal *Sex Roles* reveals that women are more often depicted in the media as "nonprofessionals, homemakers, wives or parents, and sexual gatekeepers". Some studies (e.g. Aiello & Woodhouse, 2016; Machin & Thornborrow, 2003) do consider how gender representations can flip the stereotypes with women being portrayed in more "masculine" and powerful roles and positions. However, as Machin & Thornborrow (2003, p. 468) note, such images are depicted as mere "playful fantasies": "[they are] only a game to play". Aiello & Woodhouse (2016, p.365) also identify the limitations of such apparently "equal" representations. In their study, they find "an uneven approach to the communication of differences, which privileges a version/vision of cisgender and heterosexual adults" who are well-integrated socially at the expense of "non-gender conforming individuals [who] are relegated to a canon of visibility that is limited to their bodily attributes". Beyond a feeling of equality, inclusivity, and emancipation, the representation of women in the media is evidently still ideological and problematic.

The representation of women in the media is all the more problematic because it has real-world implications. According to Giddens's (1984) structuration theory, which explores the relationship between people and their environment, "although individuals have agency, they are bound or constrained by social structures that they, in turn, reinforce" (Dixon et al., 2014, p.992). With regards to technology, women/girls and men/boys are socialized to perceive and use technology in different ways, and the media plays an integral role in this socialization. One of the consequences of this socialization is the place of women in technology-oriented careers and global business, which remains unequal, unfair, and sometimes hostile, as the April 2017 issue of *The Atlantic* (Mundy, 2017) demonstrates with its main article entitled "Why is Silicon Valley so Awful to Women?" In the tech industry, women continue to be grossly underrepresented and are often victims of sexual harassment and discrimination. As Marwick (2018) claims, Silicon Valley is not a meritocracy, as some people tend to think. Those who manage to work in the social media industry are not solely judged based on their skills (but also on their gender) which makes it all the more difficult for women to access the IT industry and be recognized as equal to men – provided they succeed in getting a position there in the first place. Indeed, women are still treated differently and are victims of discrimination. When new communication technologies first started to become common, there was hope and optimism that they would narrow the gender divide and help liberate and empower women (see Leach & Turner, 2015; Skog, 2002; Wajcman, 2007). However, as more recent research suggests, there are still major inequalities between men and women in the IT workplace (e.g. Marwick, 2018; Nogueira Couto Pereira, 2017; Wynarczyk & Ranga, 2017). One of the reasons why the gender divide is still significant has to do with cultural beliefs and practices that are deeply engrained in our society. Scholars such as Dixon et al. (2014), Leach & Turner (2015) and Wynarczyk & Ranga (2017), all elaborate on the influence of stereotypes, social/institutional structures and social expectations that socialize boys/men and girls/women and direct them into one way of thinking and behaving with regards to technology. For instance, girls seem to show less interest and confidence in using computers due to the belief that they are

less competent digitally than boys are (Cooper & Weaver, 2003; Cooper, 2006; Dixon et al., 2014). The influence of these ideologies has real-world effects when it comes to the gendered divisions present in the professional world.

Against this backdrop, I wish to examine the ways in which women/girls and men/boys are visually represented in news stories about digital communication. Using a social semiotic framework, I show the persistent "regime of truth" that exists in the media, and argue that the cultural discourses circulating are powerful tools for the socialization of young women/girls. Indeed, these skewed discourses show female users what technology is/should be for them, and what their role vis-à-vis technology is/should be. Moreover, I argue that such discourses take a very essentialist view of gender and technology while perpetuating traditional gender roles and stereotypes as well as problematic media ideologies – even under the apparent guise of celebrating (young) women's use of digital media. As an illustrative case in point, I take the following image (Figure 4.1) from the German newspaper *Die Welt*.

Figure 4.1: Die Welt, Germany, 30 September 2017. Headline (trans.): Do you know what these Emojis really mean? (Image source: Getty Image)

Here we have three young women depicted in playful poses in a kind of fantasy world; they are certainly not embedded in a real world setting or social practice. In fact, their poses carry connotations of modeling (as in a fashion magazine) and play time (through their similarity with

Barbie dolls and their exaggeratedly happy and delighted expressions). The presence of the 'red heart' emoji, 'smiling face with heart-eyes' emoji, and the 'winking face with tongue' emoji also connote a sort of playfulness and romance. Here, these women are not using digital media in any serious way; they are merely playing. Moreover, their depiction represents an essentialist view of gender and digital media. As Marwick (2014, p.63) explains, an essentialist position would claim, for instance, that "women's participation in Facebook is due to their superior multitasking and social skills". Here, in this image from *Die Welt*, these young women's behavior with digital media is seen as a natural female practice because women are more often stereotypically associated with modeling, romance, and gossiping.

In this chapter, my goal is to offer first a descriptive analysis of news media images that mainly focus on these types of problematic, essentialist views on gender and digital media. I then present a more interpretive analysis to go beyond the media's perception of gender differences as innate and to rather "focus on behavior that is encouraged, discouraged, rewarded, or prohibited and how it maps to ideal understandings of "men", "women", "feminine", and "masculine"" (Marwick, 2014, p.63). Therefore, this chapter is a way for me to explore and analyze the complex relationship between gender and digital media while investigating news media images portraying women and men with digital devices. In this regard, this chapter addresses the following overarching research questions:

1) In numerical terms, are women "present" in news media images about digital communication? In other words, are women and men equally represented (i.e. quantitatively) in these images?
2) How are women "present" in news media images about digital communication? In other words, are women and men similarly represented (i.e. qualitatively) in these images?

Research design

In this chapter, I am particularly interested in the visual representation of women's digital media practices in newspaper stories. The first step I took in order to select the relevant news media images for this chapter was to search the whole DDD for images portraying digital devices. In the DDD, I searched the image tags "smartphone", "computer/laptop", and "tablet". Through the use of these specific image tags, I was able to gather a total of 269 images of smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Since I was interested in the relationship between *people* and their digital devices, the second step consisted in discarding images that did not portray people. For example, some images showed only a finger (or part of one) touching a smartphone. Although a finger is a part of the human body, I discarded such images because they were not relevant for the purpose of this gender-oriented study. However, I kept images that showed a whole hand since it was easier to note the gender of the user in such images. The final dataset that I used for this study – after having discarded all the images that did not depict people – is composed of 214 images. They all depict people with digital devices, and come from 167 different news articles (some articles contain more than one image).

Following Fairclough (1989, p.20-21) and Thurlow & Aiello (2007, p.313), I divide my analysis into two steps: one more descriptive and one more interpretive and critical. First, from my dataset of 214 news images of people with digital devices, I offer a descriptive content analysis (cf. Bell, 2001) in order to reveal the patterned representational politics that apparently govern such news images. In this descriptive phase, I am interested in investigating whether the common underrepresentation of women in the news and in the tech industry holds true with regards to news stories about digital communication, and whether/how (in numerical terms) the representation of women's physical characteristics is depicted differently from men's. Regarding content analysis, Bell (2001) states that it is "an empirical (observational) and objective procedure for quantifying recorded 'audio-visual' (including verbal) representation using reliable, explicitly defined categories ('values' on independent 'variables')" (p.13) and that it is used to make

"generalizations about the relative frequencies of visual representations of particular classes of people, actions, roles, situations or events" (p.10) in the media. It is a quantitative and technical method which highlights dominant representations and statistical patterns across visual, verbal, or graphic data. To conduct content analysis, researchers use a set of categories or codes in order to investigate what items are present in a text, how frequently a topic is being covered, possible biases regarding the topic, and changes in the representation of a topic over time (see Bell, 2001). I use this approach in this chapter in order to investigate the ways in which men and women are represented in news media images, from a quantitative perspective. However, content analysis alone cannot help analyze a text. Cameron and Panovic (2014, p.6) underline the fact that content analysis is not discourse analysis. Indeed, if we conduct content analysis alone, we see solely what the text is about, without necessarily exploring how the writer framed his or her discourse and what his or her linguistic and visual choices mean (values, attitudes, concerns). Indeed, Bell (2001, p.13) states that content analysis alone "is seldom able to support statements about the significance, effects or interpreted meaning of a domain of representation". Therefore, it is useful to use content analysis – a descriptive approach – when investigating news media discourse in order to discover what a series of texts addresses. However, for the purpose of this chapter, it is more relevant to conduct such an analysis in combination with an interpretive and critical approach.

In the second step, I take a more interpretive and critical look at how images are constructed using the framework of social semiotics (e.g. van Leeuwen, 2005). In this interpretive and critical phase, I investigate whether women and men are similarly represented (i.e. qualitatively) in news images about digital media. I especially focus my analysis on the *visual* resources that perform some sort of semiotic work, or metafunction (cf. Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p.140). Therefore, in the second phase of my analysis, I follow Halliday & Hasan (1985) and Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) by addressing the three metafunctions of (visual) language (representational, interactional, and compositional). I also focus on the "carriers of connotation"

developed by Barthes (1977) and used in Machin's framework (2007). I then analyze the relationship between image and headline while drawing on Caple's (2013, p.143) approach to photojournalism.

Analysis: The gendered meanings of news media images

Step 1: Visual content analysis

In order to investigate whether women and men are equally represented (i.e. quantitatively) in news media images about digital communication, I selected the following variables: "gender", "facial expression", "clothing", and "age group". I coded the variable "gender" to reveal the percentage of females and males in news images, and analyzed the distribution of specifically gendered physical "types" in terms of "facial expression", "age group", and "clothing", the most relevant visual items for the purpose of my study. First, the results of the "gender" variable tell us whether there is an overrepresentation/underrepresentation of male or female images. Second, the other three remaining variables (facial expression, clothing, and age group) shed light on any physical characteristics that are overrepresented in either male or female images.

The "gender" variable can be coded using four possible values. *Female-only* and *Male-only* images portray one or more same-sex people, *Both* includes images where both men and women are present, and *N/A* (not applicable) is a value for images where the gender of the person depicted is difficult to determine (e.g. image of a hand or image where a person's head is cropped off). "Facial expressions" are defined as *Positive, Negative, Indifferent,* or *N/A* and are determined by the shape of the mouth, lips, and eyes. An image was coded as *positive* if the facial expression in the image contains a subtle or exaggerated smile, as *negative* if the person depicted is frowning or if their hand gestures display dismay, as *indifferent* if the person's facial expression is neither positive nor negative, and as *N/A* if the image does not show a person's face or if a person's facial

expression is difficult to read. To exemplify this coding process, I provide examples below of *positive*, *negative*, and *indifferent* facial expressions in images.

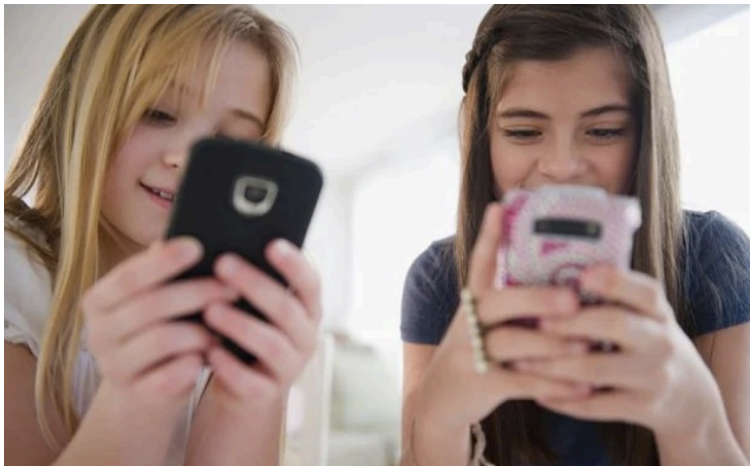

Figure 4.2: Example of "positive" value. Image from The Telegraph, UK, 19 May 2016 (Image source: Tetra Images/Alamy).

Figure 4.3: Example of "positive" value. Image from The Telegraph, UK, 4 January 2018 (Image source: Mikolette).

Figure 4.4: Example of "negative" value. Image from The Mirror, UK, 29 April 2016 (Image source: Getty Image).

Figure 4.5: Example of "negative" value. Image from Der Bund, Germany, 1 March 2016 (Image source: iStock).

Figure 4.6: Example of "indifferent" value. Image from 20 Minuten, Switzerland, 30 October 2014 (Image source: Keystone/Martin Ruetschi).

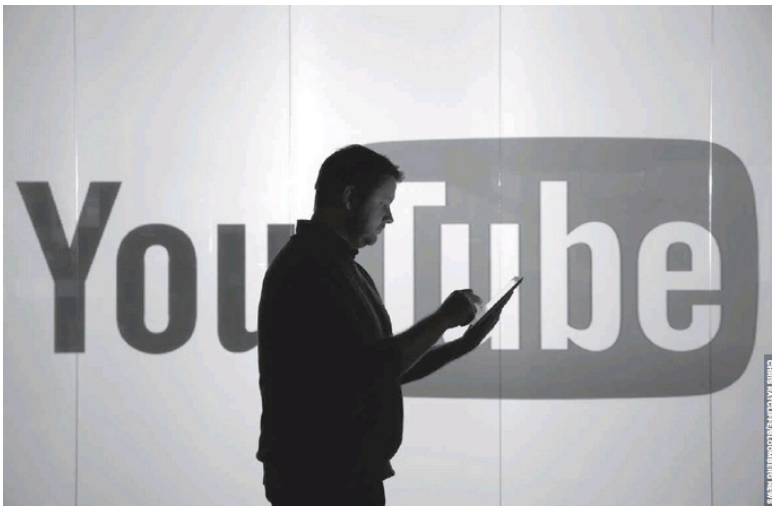

Figure 4.7: Example of "indifferent" value. Image from The Washington Post, US, 26 March 2016 (Image source: Chris Ratcliff/Bloomerg).

As regards the variable of "clothing", the choice of the specific values *Business suit* and *Swimsuit* was inspired by previous studies which analyzed the way that men and women were commonly dressed in media images (e.g. Goffman, 1979; Goodin et al., 2011). I chose the variables *business suit* and *swimsuit* because of certain gender stereotypers prevalent in the media; the business suit exemplifies the seriousness and professionalism frequently associated with men and the swimsuit

the frivolousness and vanity associated with women, as Goffman (1979, p.viii-ix) argues. The value, *Casual*, specifies other types of clothing which are less obviously gendered, for example, jeans and t-shirts. For the purposes of this study, I did not find it necessary to split the *Casual* value into multiple categories. The value, *N/A* was assigned to images that did not depict any clothing whatsoever (e.g. an image of a hand or a close-up of a face). Below are three images that exemplify the variables *business suit*, *swimsuit*, and *casual*.

Figure 4.8: Example of "casual" value. Image from The Mirror, UK, 9 July 2017 (Image source: Getty Image).

Figure 4.9: Example of "swimsuit" value. Image from Tages Anzeiger, Switzerland, 29 July 2014 (Image source: Dave Collier/Flickr).

Figure 4.10: Example of "business suit" value. Image from The Telegraph, UK, 22 August 2017 (Image source: AFP).

Next, I divided the "age group" variable into the following values: children (1-12), teens (13-18), young adults (19-40), and older (40+). I give rather wide age ranges for each of these values since it is impossible to determine the exact age of the represented participants, but associating them with a wider age group is relatively feasible. That being said, I am aware that some images represent people "in between" age groups. Therefore, when I had any serious doubt about the age group of a represented participant (e.g. whether child or teen; whether teen or young adult; whether young adult or older), I coded such images as *N/A*. Therefore, the value *N/A* was assigned to images where the age group was not clear-cut or was difficult to distinguish (e.g. an image portraying someone from behind). If an image portrayed more than one age group (e.g. children *and* parents) the variable "age group" would be assigned the value, *Mix*. To illustrate my coding of age groups, I offer below four examples that depict each group.

Figure 4.11: Example of "children" value. Image from The Telegraph, UK, 10 June 2017 (Image source: Per Breiehagen).

Figure 4.12: Example of "teens" value. Image from El Pais, Spain, 21 May 2017 (Image source: Reuters).

Figure 4.13: Example of "young adults" value. Image from Beobachter, Switzerland, 24 March 2016 (Image source: Raisa Kanareva/123RF).

Figure 4.14: Example of "older" value. Image from Die Zeit, Germany, 21 July 2016 (Image source: N/A).

In Table 4.1 below I offer an overview of the content analysis. [20]

Variable	Value	Number of occurrences	% of total 214 images	% of F and M based on number of occurrences
Gender	Female only	113	**53**	-
	Male only	61	**29**	-
	Both	33	15	-
	N/A	7	3	-
Facial expression	Positive	52	24	**56 (F) 10 (M)**
	Negative	15	7	**73 (F) 20 (M)**
	Indifferent	93	43	-
	Mix	3	1	-
	N/A	51	24	-
Clothing	Casual	183	86	-
	Business clothes	9	4	**89 (M) 22 (both)**
	Swimsuit/underwear	4	2	**100 (F)**
	N/A	18	8	-
Age group	Children (1-12)	25	15	**52 (F) 44 (M)**
	Teens (13-18)	58	23	**63 (F) 22 (M)**
	Young adults (19-40)	80	37	**59 (F) 24 (M)**
	Older (40+)	20	9	**0 (F) 80 (M)**
	Mix	13	6	-
	N/A	18	8	-

Table 4.1: Visual content analysis

Whereas previous studies have demonstrated and discussed the underrepresentation of women in news images (e.g. Collins, 2011; Jia et al., 2016; Shor et al., 2015), my dataset shows the exact opposite: a disproportionate representation of women. More than half of the images (53%) are of women/girls only whereas 29% picture men/boys only. At first glance, one might think that the overrepresentation of women and girls in these news images is a positive development. Indeed, women have been underrepresented in the news for too long, and here they are finally being "seen". Not only are they seen, they are also visually present with technology, a domain persistently considered "male". Jia et al. (2016) discuss the general underrepresentation of women in a majority of news topics besides fashion, and the fact that women are more often seen (in images) than heard (in written text). My analysis points to another news topic where females are apparently more often seen: digital media, which is also what Thurlow et al. (2019) and Thurlow (2017) noticed. But why are women more often portrayed with digital devices such as

smartphones, laptops, and tablets when women do no use/own digital devices *more* than men? Indeed, if we refer to the ownership and use of mobile devices in the Western world (where the majority of news articles come from) the gender gap is closing (cf. Pew Research Center, 2016, 2017). But in some domains such as the tech industry and gaming, there is still a gender gap with less female participation than male, and thus an overrepresentation of men (cf. Leach & Turner, 2015; Marwick, 2018; Wynarczyk & Ranga, 2017). As such, the apparent overrepresentation of female actors does not quite align with "reality".

To explain this overrepresentation of female users in these new media images, we might simply say that images representing young women attract readers' attention more easily. Women become objects that are exposed to the gaze of men, the "ideal" spectators according to Berger (1972). However, on closer inspection, this overrepresentation of female users as well as the ways in which they are represented actually strengthens popular representations and ideologies (e.g. in advertisements) that tend to portray young girls as the primary users of phones (cf. Vickery, 2014). For example, in her study, Vickery investigates the commoditization of talk, which has gendered cell phones as largely the domain of teen girls, as a feminine object. Girls are also commonly seen as the primary users of phones due to marketing reasons. Indeed, mobile phone companies advertise their products to attract female users, and thus resort to gendered stereotypes (e.g. in mobile phones' features and accessories) (cf. Shade, 2007). Although mobile phones are not intrinsically gendered, they are gendered as feminine objects in order to match gender scripts, which is what the news media images from this chapter reveal. Moreover, the overrepresentation of female users in the current analysis reinforces certain gender and language stereotypes, and more specifically the ideology of "communication", the idea that women are better interpersonal communicators (cf. Cameron, 2003). In a similar vein, women have been traditionally described as too chatty and gossipy when it comes to their relationship with phones (e.g. Green & Singleton, 2007; Ling et al., 2014). Consequently, at first glance, the news media images here convey an essentialist view of women's abilities, where communication skills are perceived as inherently

feminine. Some scholars (e.g. Brown, 1980; Kapidzic & Herring, 2001; Tannen, 1990) have noted that gender differences in discursive styles should be seen as "communicative strategies"; the linguistic choices men and women make serve particular purposes and goals, and are also context-dependent. However, as I discussed in Chapter 1, Cameron (2010) offers a critique of even such a view while emphasizing the fact that language is bound to historical and socio-cultural factors, and that it is thus subject to much variation, even between women themselves (see also Wodak, 2015 on a similar intersectional approach). Therefore, gender differences in digital communicative practices should not be seen as inherent to women (or men), as the news media's visual representations tend to suggest. Thus, women are not overrepresented in these images in order to flip traditional gender roles, but rather to reinforce them.

I now turn to the details of the content analysis and reveal how these gendered patterns emerge in more subtle ways in the images, and how they demonstrate an essentialist view of gender and technology. For one, women/girls are more often portrayed with either positive or negative facial expression than men/boys (see Figure 4.15 below). Out of all of the occurrences of positive facial expressions, women/girls make up 56% of the images whereas men/boys only 10%. Regarding negative facial expressions, women/girls make up 73% of the images compared to men/boys with 20%. Again, the idea that women are naturally more expressive and emotional expresses an essentialist view that enacts "an understanding of gender differences as innate and rooted in biological and psychological underpinnings" (Marwick, 2014, p.63). However, as it is well understood in gender studies, gender is a social construct. Gender is something we "do" or perform, but not something we "are" (e.g. Butler, 1990). For instance, children are socialized by their parents/caregivers, teachers, media institutions, and society in general to adopt the "correct" gender behavior: either a "female" or a "male" behavior. Consequently, there is a pressure for children to conform to appropriate gender categories; and through the media's perpetuation of fixed and normalized gendered representations, gender socialization continues. As images such as Figures 4.15 (depiction of a woman with a negative expression) and 4.16 (depiction of a women

with a positive expression) expose, the media implicitly tells boys that they should not express their feelings the same way girls do, or that they should not "cry like a girl". Such behavior would be considered unacceptable since it would go against perceived gender-appropriate behavior. With regards to technology, the news media shows women and girls that it is appropriate for them to use digital media while being exaggeratedly expressive and emotional, because these are supposedly inherent female characteristics.

Figure 4.15: The Daily Mail, UK, 25 February 2016. Original image caption: *Researchers have come up with a list of 17 social media commandments we should stick to, in order not to annoy other uses. They include not over-sharing on Facebook or dumping anyone by text.* (Image source: Corbis)

Figure 4.16: Die Welt, Germany, 23 February 2017. No image caption. (Image source: Getty Image)

As for clothing, although most of the people depicted in the images are wearing "casual" clothes, it is interesting (but not surprising) to note that all of the images where people are wearing a swimsuit or underwear are of women/girls (see example below in Figure 4.17), and that there is not a single female-only image in my dataset depicting a woman in business clothing (89% are 'male-only' images and 22% are 'mix'). Although I must emphasize the fact that there are very few images displaying business clothing (n=9) and swimsuit/underwear (n=4), the statistics align with previous studies (e.g. Goffman, 1979; Goodin, 2011; Ringrose, 2011) which investigated the sexualized nature of images of women in the media, and studies (Lazar, 2000) which explored the stereotypical depictions of men as business professionals/breadwinners and women as housewives. While it may seem encouraging to find very few images portraying women/girls in scanty clothes, the fact that 100% of those images are female-only is not cause for hope.

Figure 4.17: The Mirror, UK, 23 June 2016. No image caption. (Image source: N/A)

In the same vein, my analysis also reveals another statistic: of all of the images portraying people taking a selfie, 10 are female-only and 2 are "mix"; thus, there is no male-only image portraying a man/boy or several men/boys taking a selfie, which is also what Thurlow et al. (2019) noticed.

Although there are only 12 "selfie" images in my dataset, my results align with previous studies. Research suggests that women are more active than men when it comes to taking and posting selfies (e.g. Dhir et al., 2016; Qiu et al., 2015) and that women/girls like to present themselves as attractive online, which can "parallel, and possibly intensify, gender norms offline" (Manago et al., 2008, p.446). This aligns with the popular conception that women are/should be more concerned about their body and appearance than men. Although research shows that women tend to post more selfies than men, men certainly do take selfies as well (cf. Döring et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the fact that there are only images of women/girls taking selfies in my analysis is revealing of the fact that females are under more scrutiny than males, as Dhir et al. (2016) suggest. Here, the news media portraying these images perpetuates a kind of voyeurism and highlights the objectification of women, as I explore in more detail in the following section regarding "age". In sum, Figure 4.17 above highlights the notion that women/girls' digital practices are centered on their bodies and self-image. These kinds of representations are evidently problematic as they distort the relationship that women have with digital media and, as Thurlow (2017, p.17) suggests, they highlight women's vulnerability and irresponsibility.

Investigating the relationship between the age and the gender of the people depicted in news images about digital media is also quite revealing of gender stereotypes. In the "children" category, we find only a very slight overrepresentation of girls. However, in the "teen" and "young adult" categories, the gender gap is much wider; there are significantly more images of women/girls (63% in the teen category and 59% in the young adult category) than men/boys (respectively 22% and 24%). Furthermore, this tendency seems to shift when images are of older people; 80% of these images portray males only (see Figure 4.18 below), and 20% depict both genders. This relationship between age and gender aligns with previous research on gender roles in TV ads (e.g. Furnham & Paltzer, 2010), which examined the age of the main characters in the commercials analyzed. Researchers noticed that females are more often portrayed as young, and men are more often shown as middle-aged and older. This tendency to portray younger women

and older men on TV, in ads, or in the news media resonates with an idea that Berger (1972) developed regarding gender roles in movies. Berger (1972) claims: "Women are depicted in quite a different way to men – not because the feminine is different from the masculine – but because the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him" (p.64). In order to please the male gaze, women need to be attractive, and youth is an aspect of the female body that is considered appealing. In turn, this can explain why young women are more often displayed in different media. The images from my dataset show a strong connection between the age of the people depicted and their roles and personalities. Indeed, the younger women look childish and vacuous with their exaggerated facial expressions (i.e. they 'are'), and the middle-aged men represented in the dataset are often portrayed as serious professionals (i.e. they 'act'). This is something we see in Figure 4.18 below, which does not just represent any man; it depicts Steve Jobs (the former CEO and co-founder of Apple) who is the very incarnation of a successful, professional middle-aged man. It is also a reminder that women are underrepresented in the IT world and Silicon Valley. They apparently do not belong to that world. Therefore, the images from my dataset cast women and men in their traditional gender roles when it comes to their digital practices.

Figure 4.18: LA Times, US, 21 June 2017. Original image caption: *Apple CEO Steve Jobs holds up an iPhone at the MacWorld Conference in San Francisco on Jan. 9, 2007* (Image source: Associated Press)

Ultimately, my visual content analysis highlights the overrepresentation of women and girls in news images about digital media, as well as the gendered distribution of specific types. These visual patterns resonate with deep-seated and long-standing Western ideals (cf. Clack, 1999). As such, a dualistic reasoning divides different aspects of reality into categories such as mind/body, which has ultimately led to an association between mind/male and body/female. Thus, as Clack (1999, p. 7) contends, "Reason is understood as a masculine attribute most closely associated with the male, and nature is understood as a feminine attribute most closely associated with the female". As Jia et al. (2016, p.2) argue in their large-scale analysis of news images, women are often linked to "bodies and the private sphere" and men are associated with "mind and the public sphere". Similarly, in my data, the images also align with this worldview. Men are more often represented as older/more mature/serious people, in a working/business/IT environment, and women are more often portrayed as younger/childish, in scanty clothes, with exaggerated facial expressions, and concerned with their body. Following Hall (1997, p.228), the news media tries to "fix" and naturalize one perspective over all others. With gender representations, the media tries to fix biological differences with seemingly natural gender roles. Gender differences appear natural and innate – which is the goal of the media's use of stereotypes – they are "beyond history, permanent and fixed" (Hall, 1997, p.245). Moreover, as Cameron (2006, p.144) states, "when difference is naturalized, inequality is institutionalized". The news media plays an undeniable role in sustaining relations of power; in the case of gender relations, a masculine or patriarchal ideology is favored. These ideologies are ones that are deeply rooted in our culture and make it hard to effectuate change with regards to the "digital gender divide".

Now that I have established (in numerical terms) the skewed gendered distribution of images in my dataset, I will turn to a more interpretive and critical perspective on these images and reveal why they are problematic.

Step 2: Social semiotic analysis

The second step of my analysis utilizes a more interpretive/critical perspective, and aims to explore whether women and men are similarly represented (i.e. qualitatively) in news images about digital communication.

1. Visual analysis

For the current visual analysis, I have selected two images (Figure 4.19 and Figure 4.20 below) that are similar in terms of representational, interactional, and compositional meaning, in order to compare and analyze them in detail. I selected Figure 4.19 because it is a "typical" depiction of women's digital media practices. Figure 4.20 is rather an "atypical" depiction of men's digital media practices, as I argue in my analysis. However, I chose this particular image in order to draw comparisons with a similar "female" image. On the surface, both of these images look quite similar: both represented participants are sitting at a table in rather plain settings, and both are laughing alone with their phone. Both images are stock images (from Getty Images and Alamy) which depict universal "types" in bare settings and symbolize an idea rather than telling a story. This aligns with Machin's (2004, p. 316) description of Getty Images:

> "attractive models are highly posed and are set in non-descript locations to make them usable across the world. They do not represent actual places or events and they do not document or bear witness, but they symbolically represent marketable concepts such as 'contentment' and 'freedom'"

In addition to following Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design, I draw on Machin's (2007) multimodal framework and Barthes's (1977) analysis of carriers of connotation in order to analyze the three metafunctions of these two images. I explore how both images transmit certain "meanings" while focusing on how semiotic signs "represent ideas beyond [their] own system of signs" (cf. representational metafunction), how they create relationships between participants (cf. interpersonal metafunction), and how they form a coherent whole (cf. compositional metafunction) (Machin, 2007, p. 17). Through this analysis, the differences between

the two images become apparent and reveal underlying gender and media ideologies that are worth examining.

Figure 4.19: Die Welt, Germany, 22 September 2017. Original image caption: *Juhuu!* (Image source: Getty Image)

Figure 4.20: The Telegraph, UK, 2 March 2017. Original image caption: *Just chatting on the phone with a friend can banish loneliness* (Image source: Alamy).

Analysis of Figure 4.19

In this image, an attractive, young, White, blonde woman wearing a colorful flowery shirt is sitting indoors in a decontextualized setting, and holding a red cup of coffee/tea and a phone. She is looking at her phone with an exaggerated smile. This is what this generic stock photograph denotes (i.e. what it literally represents/shows). But here, I would like to focus on the image's connotations; how do semiotic resources (e.g. objects, colors, participants, setting) transmit meaning and what kind of meaning do they convey? In other words, what kind of "cultural discourse(s)" does this image express? I suggest that this image communicates a specific discourse of femininity, of what it is to be a woman, and more specifically, a woman using digital media.

The main participant is a woman who is categorized through stereotyped physical characteristics that cast her as a beautiful, attractive woman. This is not surprising since stock photography often resorts to attractive models that should be "generic"; their commonness or universality should erase individual features and highlight stereotypes (Machin, 2004, p.323). Previous research on White female stereotypes argues that they are usually stereotyped as attractive and blonde, alongside other characteristics such as being shallow and egotistical (i.e. mainly interested in their physical appearance and materialistic) (e.g. Conley, 2013; Niemann et al. 1994). In this image, the woman's behavior suggests the same idea of shallowness: she is engaged in a kind of trivial action (i.e. holding a cup of coffee/tea and a phone, smiling, and staring at her phone). According to Machin (2007), who himself draws on Halliday (1985), this woman is engaged in a "behavioral" process as opposed to a "material" process; that is, she is acting "without material outcome" (Machin, 2007, p.124). In other words, this woman is not an active agent; she simply appears and reacts. Nevertheless, her appearance is meaningful; here "agency is communicated symbolically through posture, clothing, use of products rather than by what [she] actually [does] in the world" (Machin, 2007, p.125).

Objects and clothing are thus meaningful; they indicate that this woman is a particular "type". As Machin, (2004, p.322) claims, "[p]rops are used to connote not only the setting but also

the identities of the actors and the nature of activities, but in terms of 'types' rather than individual identities". The cup of coffee/tea that she is holding may represent a privileged, materialistic, sophisticated cosmopolitan lifestyle (cf. Machin, 2007, p.32). This cup is red, which is the color of love, warmth, happiness, sensuality, romance, and femininity. The fact that the color is a high-saturated red makes it even more salient, emphasizes the above characteristics related to femininity, and creates an energetic mood. Moreover, the woman is wearing a shirt with flowers in different vibrant/high-saturated colors. Flowers symbolize nature and beauty; here they underscore the woman's femininity since nature and women have traditionally been associated together (e.g. English Romanticism in literature, and Dualism in philosophy). Therefore, both the red cup and the woman's clothes emphasize the participant's identity as a sophisticated feminine person. Finally, the woman is holding another object: a mobile phone, traditionally seen as a symbol of mobility, modernity, and freedom. The mobile phone is a recurrent prop in stock photography and can symbolize different ideas depending on the context. For instance, Machin (2004, p.324) discusses representations of women with phones/laptops, props that connote "positions of power in business and the corporate city-scape". However, here, the mobile phone does not carry the same connotations. As explained above, young women and girls have traditionally been portrayed as the primary users of the phone (Vickery, 2014). They are indeed the ones who are considered better communicators, and as being chatty and gossipy (cf. Cameron, 2003; Green & Singleton, 2007; Ling et al., 2014). Figure 4.19 employs these essentialist associations to create a normalized depiction of women using digital media for unserious, playful, and gossipy reasons. The phone is thus perceived more as a toy than a tool, and is seen as reinforcing traditional gender roles. Although the phone is not intrinsically gendered (cf. Marwick, 2014, p.66), I suggest that the phone is used within the gendered (i.e. patriarchal) framework of the (stock) photo industry and the news media industry. In turn, the mobile phone reinforces a gendered script (feminine in this case) that is created through the semiotic resources involved (e.g. participants, objects, setting).

The setting of the image is another crucial "carrier of meaning" and tells as much of a story. In this sense, there is no discernable setting/background, which is also typical of stock photography (cf. Machin, 2004). The woman looks like she is sitting in an interior space (perhaps at home or at a café), next to what we would assume to be a window (due to the reflection). Since there is no visible background and the image is a close-up of the woman's face and upper body, the viewer is led to focus his/her attention on what he/she can see and on the connotations of the few visible/salient objects. This decontextualized image limits the woman to her appearance and what her appearance and behavior reveal. Indeed, it is as though she is not given a chance to speak and tell her whole story, which would be the case if we were shown more detail. Therefore, this "conceptual" image (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) does not *tell* a specific story, it rather *symbolizes* an idea – the idea of what it is to be a woman, a woman using technology.

In sum, all the semiotic resources in this image (i.e. objects, colors, clothing, participant, setting) create an identity for this woman; they tell us who she is, what "type" (cf. Machin, 2004) she is. More precisely, they limit her to a very specific role. The woman does not come across as anything more than a beautiful cosmopolitan woman. From a semiotic point of view, she is constrained in a "traditional" role. The semiotic resources in this image connote that the woman is a particular "type": modern, cosmopolitan, and feminine/beautiful. More precisely, this image fetishes the feminine and the beautiful; indeed, its portrayal of the woman stays within the narrow boundaries of beauty and femininity, without giving her the opportunity to look more powerful and dignified. The woman could actually be using her phone for any reason, but here, the props convey these particular features, and in turn, the technology acquires narrowing non-empowering characteristics. Such characteristics echo popular associations that people make between the mobile phone and women's emotional and social uses of the phone. It is perhaps due to these essentialist associations that are so deeply ingrained in our minds and culture that it seems natural to portray women this way. The caption of the image in Figure 4.19 sums this up perfectly with its brief "Juhuu!" (Woohoo!), which is an interjection used to express sudden excitement and joy. The

fact that the woman's emotions are encapsulated by a caption which is not even a word, but a simplistic exclamation, further demonstrates the reductionist manner in which women are portrayed by the media.

As a final comment regarding the social semiotic analysis of Figure 4.19, I would like to draw a comparison between certain visual representations of women with digital technologies and another frequent phenomenon in stock photography: the representation of women laughing alone with salads (cf. Grossman, 2014, see also Zimmerman, 2011). Whether women are depicted smiling/laughing alone staring at their phone or laughing alone with a salad (cf. Figure 4.21 below), they are depicted in very narrow terms. The salad, as a cultural narrative, symbolizes healthy diet and weight loss, and more specifically *women's* obsession with their weight, body, and appearance. This interest in appearance is not an inherently female characteristic; indeed, women and girls are socialized in a way that shows them and teaches them that they should be concerned about their bodies in order to look thin and beautiful. As a result, women and girls are socialized to eat light and healthy meals such as salads (cf. Rolls et al., 1991) in order to be "true" women. Unlike portraying women's dietary habits, the images on the right-hand side of Figure 4.21 stereotypically portray what their digital practices look like, that is, centered on exaggerated emotional and expressive exchanges (recall the caption of Figure 4.19 and its "Woohoo!"). In both cases (with their phone and with their salad), these women look as if they are enjoying themselves – perhaps a little too much. [21] Both kinds of illustrations point to the same patterns of behavior that are encouraged in women. In other words, these patterns of behaviors are transposed onto common understandings of what a woman is or what being feminine means (i.e. concerned about their appearance, expressive, emotional). On the contrary, the same patterns of behavior are discouraged in men: indeed they are not seen eating salads or using digital media the same way both of these women are. Women and girls are thus limited by such visual representations, which only serve to make them look vacuous. It is precisely the "vacuousness" of women in news media

images portraying women's digital media practices that my focus group participants discuss in the next chapter, when they describe "airheaded" women.

Figure 4.21: Montage of images representing women laughing alone with salad (left) and women laughing alone with phone (right)

Analysis of Figure 4.20

In Figure 4.20, a handsome young White man wearing a cap and a sweater is sitting at a table in a decontextualized blank setting. He is holding a phone next to his ear while laughing. On the table are a laptop, a decorative plant, a cup, and glasses. Here, I argue that each semiotic resource (e.g. objects, colors, poses, clothing, setting) is being used to connote a discourse of what it is to be a modern man, and more specifically, a man using new technology. As in Figure 4.19, the main participant is engaged in a kind of trivial activity: the man is holding his phone and is seemingly having a conversation on the phone while smiling. This "behavioral process" is also typical of stock photography. Following Machin (2007, p.127), this man is less an actor than a carrier of meaning where what he is is more important than what he does. What "type" does he represent? What do objects, clothing and setting reveal about his identity? As in Figure 4.19, the image displays a cup of coffee, which may also symbolize a cosmopolitan lifestyle. However, here, the cup is less salient: it is light grey and is thus blends in with everything else since the whole picture and other objects (e.g. laptop, cap, sweater) have the same color and tone. These light and greyish tones create a specific mood: cold, peaceful, distant, and staged. Regarding the objects, the laptop may indicate that the man is well-off, independent, and mobile. His clothing (cap and sweater) suggests that he is relaxed and laid back, and not in a formal situation. The glasses on the table may signify intellectual life and work. The decorative plant on the table indicates interior decorating taste – a characteristic usually associated with women. Finally, as in Figure 4.19, the phone he is holding expresses modernity, mobility, and freedom. The man in Figure 4.20 seems to be using his phone for social and casual reasons as well (as the image caption suggests); therefore, this portrayal goes against the essentialist view that associates women's supposedly inherent social skills and their use of the phone for social and emotional reasons. This man may be using his phone for social or emotional use; yet, this is not a restrictive or narrowing characteristic for him. Indeed, in my data, this kind of depiction that "flips the script" (cf. Aiello & Woodhouse, 2016) or

that goes against traditional gender conceptions and clichés is unusual with regards to the visual representations of men and digital media.

Here, the blank and decontextualized setting also reveals a "flipping of the script". Referring to Machin & Thornborrow's (2003) study of images in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, Machin (2007, p.34) notes: "women are often shown in large, airy, interior spaces, saturated with light". Here, it is the man who is depicted in a stereotypically female place that resembles a page of a home interior magazine. As Machin (2007, p.34) remarks about those interior spaces, participants (the man in this case) "may engage only in trivial activities, but visually it is connoted that they do so in exciting, sophisticated settings". Therefore, this man is portrayed in a "typical female" setting – a "typical male" setting would be an outdoor setting or a work office for instance. Moreover, the man looks like he is depicted in a fantasy world due to the low modality of the image (i.e. decontextualized stylized setting/background). In this fantasy world, we can see a modern man depicted in a more "feminine" role who is "flipping the script" in some ways. He has sophisticated and modern tastes, and seems to be social and expressive/emotional. Still, there are hints of an intellectual life. This man seems to be an ideal man; he is modern/progressive – he goes against stereotypical depictions of men and technology – but he still looks smart and very masculine (i.e. the facial hair highlights his masculinity). Aiello and Woodhouse (2016, p.362) refer to this design resource as "juxtaposition": "visual comparisons between clashing, though familiar attributes or between contrasting attributes and actions, settings, or moods". Here, the man's masculine and typical traits stand in contrast with the more "feminine" décor, setting, and behavior. Nevertheless, this fantastical world is also a reminder that it is removed from reality.

In sum, Figure 4.20 transports the viewer to an enchanted world where we get to meet an ideal young handsome and modern man. Though he might be at home enjoying a break on his phone with a cup of coffee, the props still connote that he is a particular "type" (cf. Machin, 2004): smart, social, cosmopolitan, and modern, which are characteristics that contrast with the

traditional limiting descriptive features of women who would be portrayed in a lifestyle magazine. Indeed, he is portrayed as a "hipster" due to his high level of interest in technology, his casual clothes, and his studied nonchalance. Because of hegemonic definitions of patriarchy anchored in our minds and culture, we take it for granted that "masculine" carries more power than "feminine" (cf. Derrida, 1972). Therefore, as this man is depicted in a different and less "masculine" environment, he is still perceived as stylish and progressive. He does not have to prove anything since "masculine" is dominant anyway. In my data, men are mostly portrayed in "typical masculine" ways (e.g. wearing business suits, looking older, mature, professional, and serious or without exaggerated smiles), but can also be portrayed this way, as flipping the script in some ways (although not totally). Women, on the contrary, seem to be cast in very narrow and traditional visual frames.

2. Image-text relationship

In a multimodal analysis, it is essential to take into account different semiotic modes – especially in an analysis of news discourse. Here, for illustrative purposes, I only discuss the relationship between the image and the headline and show how the news media takes an essentialist position on gender and technology. To analyze the text-image relationship, I draw on Caple's (2013, p.143) approach to photojournalism; she herself draws on Royce (2002) and Halliday and Hasan (1985) to discuss the types of semantic ties between words and images in news stories. Below are two images (Figures 4.22 and 4.23) that I selected because they are in some way "typical" of the ways in which women's and men's digital media practices are represented. Figure 4.22 portrays the negative facial expression associated with women in my dataset, and Figure 4.23 illustrates the type of clothing (i.e. business suit) and thus environment that is more common to men in my data.

Figure 4.22: Le Figaro, France, 10 December 2015. Original image caption: *Mettre un point à la fin d'un texto peut suffire à vous rendre profondément antipathique aux yeux de vos interlocuteurs* (Adding a period at the end of a text message suffices to make you deeply unpleasant in the eyes of your interlocutors) (Image source: Getty Image).

Figure 4.23 The New York Times, US 6 July 2017. Original image caption: *The World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January. Spooked by surveillance and wary of being exposed by hackers, executives are switching to apps that allow them to send encrypted and self-destructing texts* (Image source: European Press Photo Agency)

In Figure 4.22, the headline is the following: *Pourquoi il ne faut surtout pas finir ses textos par un point* (Why one should never end text messages with a period). The relationship between text and image can be analyzed following Halliday (1985) and his functional categories (represented participants, process, circumstances, and attributes), which Royce (2002, pp.193-194) calls: *identification*, *activity*,

circumstances, and *attributes*. Below (Table 4.2) is an analysis of the relationship between the image and the headline, following Caple (2013) and Royce (2002).

Feature	**Image**	**Headline**
Identification (who, what)	Woman, Phone	*Textos, Point*
Activity	Staring at phone	*Finir ses textos par un point*
Circumstances (setting)	N/A	N/A
Attributes (qualities)	Looks annoyed	N/A

Table 4.2
Analysis of image-text relationship (Figure 4.22)

As Thurlow et al. (2019, p.11) note, there is an " occasionally oxymoronic relation between the visual and verbal content of news stories." This would seem to be the case with Figure 4.22 and the headline that accompanies it, which appear completely unrelated. With regards to *identification*, there is no written mention of a woman. The headline does not refer to any human being. Yet, visual and verbal elements can have an indirect relationship. As Caple (2013, p.144) explains, "co-extension" is a type of cohesive relationship between image and text that refers to "a meaning relation between items from the same general field of meaning; typically realized by synonymy, antonymy, hyponoymy, meronymy". Here, the phone depicted in the image is not referenced in the headline; however, the headline mentions *textos* (text messages), which are usually typed on phones. As a result, this is an instance of a "co-extensive" tie (i.e. meronymy or part-whole relationship) between the image and the text; the text message is a part of the phone. Regarding *activity*, the main thing that the woman is doing is staring at her phone. However, in the headline, there is also mention of another type of activity: *finir ses textos par un point* (ending a text message with a period). There is thus no direct or indirect connection between these two activities. In a similar vein, there is no cohesive tie between the image and the text concerning *circumstances*.

Indeed, the image shows no background at all; it is thus impossible to locate the scene precisely. Finally, with regards to *attributes,* the participants' characteristics/qualities (cf. Royce, 2002, p.194), there is no relationship between image and text. We might speculate and imagine that the woman in the image is reading a text that ends with a period, which is the cause of her annoyed facial expression. The image seems to depict the consequence of the act of sending a text ending with a period; however, we can only speculate because we cannot see what is on the woman's phone, and the irritated expression easily noticeable on the woman's face is not referenced in the headline.

In sum, the only "co-extensive" tie one can make between the image and the headline concerns the phone and the reference to text messages. The headline is about a specific type of digital media practice (i.e. why we should not end our text messages with periods); it is thus a rather trivial piece of news. The fact that journalists chose this specific image with an expressive and emotional woman to accompany the headline and body text is meaningful; it highlights deeply rooted ideologies. The image serves to make some stereotypical gender references to women and their extreme feelings and emotions, and their ability to express them openly. It also aligns with previous research showing that women are more often seen in unserious news such as news stories about fashion (Jia et al., 2016). Moreover, the association between the headline about a specific type of digital media practice and the image portraying a woman echoes popular beliefs about the feminine characteristics of mobile communication. As I already mentioned, women are indeed often seen as the primary users of mobile phones and are often described as good communicators and talkers. Nevertheless, these recurrent types of associations as well as the analysis of the image-text relationship point to problematic ideologies that narrow down women's roles and potential. This "gender disconnect" " (Thurlow et al., 2019, p.11) between the visual depictions of women and the verbal content of news articles not only emphasizes the misrepresentation of women and their digital practices, but also a "problematic blurring of the kinds of editorial 'realities' that are widely expected in the news", the "realities" being the actual news coverage and the choice and use of such images (Thurlow et al., 2019, p.19).

Next, the headline in Figure 4.23 is the following: *As elites switch to texting, watchdogs fear loss of transparency*

Feature	Image	Headline
Identification (who, what)	Main businessman, Other businessmen, Phone,	*Elites*, *Watchdogs*
Activity	Making phone call Walking	*Switch to texting*
Circumstances (setting)	Annual meeting	N/A
Attributes (qualities)	N/A	fear

Table 4.3
Analysis of image-text relationship (Figure 4.23)

Regarding *identification*, Figure 4.23 depicts a businessman using his phone while surrounded by other business people, and the headline makes reference to "elites" and "watchdogs". Although there is no obvious connection between the people and things identified in both image and headline, there is a "'co-extensive" tie (i.e. intersemiotic hyponymy) between "elites", "watchdogs" and the people (i.e. men) represented in the picture. Intersemiotic hyponymy refers to a class-subclass relationship (cf. Royce, 2002, p. 194). Here, "elites" and "watchdogs" are part of the same class of important governmental/business people, and the people represented in the image (i.e. businessmen) are a subclass of elites/watchdogs. There is thus an indirect connection between the identified participants in both image and text. However, the headline does not mention the *activities* portrayed in the image, and the only activity mentioned in the headline, "switch to texting", is not visually represented in the image either. Finally, the *circumstances* and *attributes* of both image and headline do not connect at all. Indeed, there is no written allusion to any kind of annual meeting in the headline, and the watchdogs' "fear" is not visually present in the picture. In sum, after reading the headline and seeing the image, the only co-extensive tie one can make is between the

participants, "elites" and "watchdogs," and the main businessman and other businessmen visually portrayed in the image. The audience is thus led to make associations between those participants, which may unconsciously strengthen certain gender and media ideologies. Indeed, the world of elites and watchdogs mentioned in the headline is one that is mostly led by men (e.g. governmental agencies, global business, IT industry, etc.), and Figure 4.23 presents a male-oriented reality. Although the image alone and the headline do not tell us what kind of meeting is taking place, the image caption mentions the WEF (World Economic Forum), which is an event that attracts an uneven proportion of males and females (Schmitt, 2016). The WEF might be considered the epitome of the male-dominated political, economic and global business elite. Therefore, the choice of this image representing men to accompany the headline makes sense if one takes into account the overrepresentation of men in the global business industry. However, this is not to say that doing so is right. Not only does such an image emphasize the popular associations between one gender (i.e. male) and the business and political elite in an essentialist way, it also reflects the reality of women's place in the tech industry and global business (cf. Marwick, 2018; Nogueira Couto Pereira, 2017; Wynarczyk & Ranga, 2017), which is what the image representing Steve Jobs (Figure 4.15) emphasizes.

Discussion: The problematic gendering of digital communication

As a final illustration of my argument, I would like to offer the following image from *The Guardian* which apparently "flips the script" and depicts a woman using her phone wearing business attire. Figure 4.24 below is the only image from my dataset that includes a woman wearing business attire:

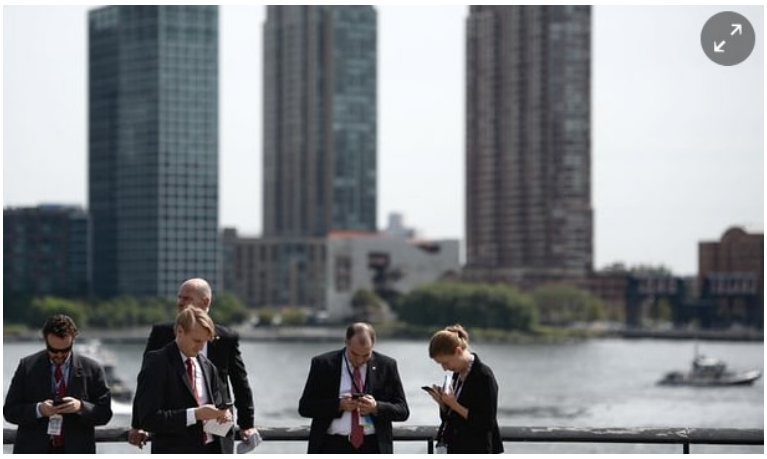

Figure 4.24: The Guardian, UK, 4 November 2016. Original image caption: *New group…* (Image source: Getty Image)

In this image, there are five people: four men on the left, and one woman on the right. Although the woman is indeed present and is wearing business attire, she is still underrepresented. She might well be using technology for serious professional reasons, but compositionally speaking, this image does not produce a favorable impression of her; she is still disadvantaged. The meaning of this image stresses a much wider world of opportunities for men, particularly career-wise. This woman appears to be included; however, on closer inspection one notices that this is merely a feeling of inclusivity.

The cultural discourses that circulate in the press are powerful tools for the socialization of young girls and women; indeed, they suggest what digital media is/should be for women/girls. Although what I presented in this chapter might not come as a surprise – we are indeed familiar with the ways in which women and girls are stereotypically depicted in the media – my goal was to go beyond those well-known and well-established stereotypes. My analysis showed that women are overrepresented in news media images about digital communication, which also aligns with what Thurlow et al. (2019) demonstrated. I showed that women are usually represented completely differently from men. Unlike the active role that women frequently play in society with regard to digital media (e.g. the #MeToo movement), the press depicts the relationship between women and

digital media in limiting, essentialist, and sexist terms. As my content analysis reveals, women are the ones who are more frequently depicted with exaggerated facial expressions, with scanty clothes, interested in their appearance, and young. In turn, they usually come across as unserious, vacuous, childish, and as objects believed to please the gaze of the male spectator. Unlike women, men are more often represented as older and more mature, serious or without exaggerated facial expression, and more regularly portrayed in a working/business/IT environment. These gendered patterns that I analyzed in the content analysis were then critically observed in my social semiotic analysis, where I exposed what it means to be a woman or a man using digital media, either in uncommon ways that intend to "flip the script" or in more usual ways that reinforce traditional gender roles. From salads to phones, women are still visually depicted in unflattering and narrowing terms, with a focus on the same recurrent essentialist characteristics. Unfortunately, the fact that the news media images from this study are narrowing for female users can have an impact on how women view technology. As Thurlow et al. (2019) argue, "this overrepresentation clearly warps the picture and potentially perpetuates a sense of young women as problematic or at risk, and/or of communication being woman's work" (Thurlow et al., 2019, p.14). Thus, the overrepresentation of women in addition to the limiting and sexist ways in which they are represented emphasizes the problematic gendering of digital communication by the news media (and by stock photography).

My goal in this chapter was to contribute to gender and media studies, while following contemporary scholars who view the relationship between gender and digital media as a dynamic, fluid, and context-dependent relationship (cf. Marwick, 2014). As I showed from my dataset of 167 newspaper stories about digital communication, the news media's visual representation of women and digital media is rather one-dimensional and limiting for women. Images here tend to follow an essentialist ideology that considers women's conversational, social and emotional skills, as well as their interest in beauty and appearance, as inherent to them. The news media industry (in selecting the specific images that form my dataset) and the photo industry (in creating such images)

construct gendered identities in relation to what they consider "normed" categories. They create/construct a reality but do not reflect one, which is problematic because such visual representations socialize men and women into these kinds of behaviors. In my analysis, the participants who look young, are interested in their appearance, and are overly expressive and emotional while using technology are mainly women because these kinds of behaviors are mapped to common ideas of what it is to be a woman. This is what being a woman using technology is/looks like. In exposing such issues, I follow contemporary gender scholars who "focus on behavior that is encouraged, discouraged, rewarded, or prohibited and how it maps to ideal understandings of "men", "women", "feminine", and "masculine"" (Marwick, 2014, p.63). As a result, I have showed that women/girls' digital practices that are encouraged visually are confining and disempowering for women, and that it is the case with news stories from different languages and countries, with little variation. However, in practice – that is, not in the media – digital media practices depend on a wide range of factors that are not necessarily gender-related. Although there is still hope that digital media will help to liberate and empower women – through digital feminist activism for instance (cf. Keller et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2018) – the images from this study disclose a very narrow vision of what women do/should do with technology and indicate that the news media is out of touch with what is actually occurring in the world while taking a very essentialist position towards gender differences.

PART II
SOCIAL MEANINGS

Chapter 5

"Wired women" speak back to news media discourse: A feminist intervention

Setting the scene: Speaking out, speaking back

In October 2017, the #MeToo movement began as a response to the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace – particularly in the film industry. After the first accusations against the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, women began employing the hashtag #MeToo to share their own personal stories of harassment and to condemn the misconduct of other powerful men. Within a week, the movement had spread all over the world. In the case of the #MeToo movement (or the French equivalent #BalanceTonPorc), new media (i.e. Twitter) offer a platform for women to be agents and actors of change and to fight back against the abuses of a male-dominated society. Although digital media platforms can be intimidating for women – women might be criticized for their feminist activism – such platforms "are also making women's and girls' voices and participation *visible* in ways that can generate the type of ripple effect" of the #MeToo movement (Mendes et al., 2018, p.244). By raising awareness and by bringing women and girls together, digital media may be a promising tool that will offer them the opportunity and power to effect societal changes, as other studies have demonstrated (e.g. Dixon, 2014; Keller et al., 2018; Thrift, 2014).

While the #MeToo movement serves as an example of women "speaking out" about a

specific social issue, my goal in this chapter is to explore the ways in which women "speak back" to the power-players who perpetuate this social issue (i.e. the journalists who shape news discourse). As bell hooks notes:

> It is that act of speech, of "talking back", that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject –the liberated voice (hooks, 1989)

Instances of "talking back" are acts of courage and strength that serve to empower the underpriviledged, as bell hooks' quote above illustrates. Speaking back allows silent, subjugated "objects" to become free "subjects" with a voice. As defined by hooks (1989) in her experience, speaking back means "daring to disagree" or "having an opinion" (p.5), which is the meaning I want to emphasize in this chapter as I explore how young women "speak back" to dominant discourses in the press. More specifically, I explore the ways in which a group of women's naturalized assumptions about gender (and digital media) come about, and what ideological repercussions these women's discourse has.

Furthermore, this chapter on "speaking back" to problematic discourses also represents a methodological contribution to the field of digital discourse studies. Indeed, I consider "speaking back" a critical cultural method/intervention. My methodological intervention is to allow young people to speak for themselves (i.e. to give them a voice) as well as to raise critical awareness about a relevant social issue. In this sense, I am following Thurlow's (2007, p. 288) lead when he points out that news media commentary "often bears little resemblance to actual practice" and that young people are almost never given a voice in the news media. I also follow Vickery (2017, p.xii), whose recent analysis is "punctuated by the voices and lived experiences of young people who rarely figure in public discourses about teens, technology, and risk". Like Vickery, I want to give a voice to young people, and to young *women* in particular. The need to give women a voice and to critically explore gender and power relations is particularly relevant today, in an era where notions such as "sexism" and "patriarchy"" are considered outdated and irrelevant, and where the focus is often placed on the celebration of women's empowerment (cf. Lazar, 2014). This perception is at the core of the "postfeminist" sensibility. As McRobbie

(2004) argues:

> "postfeminism actively draws on and invokes feminism as that which can be taken into account in order to suggest that equality is achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasize that it is no longer needed, a spent force" (McRobbie, 2004 p.4)

Although we must take into account the fact that women have achieved a lot with regards to their position in the workplace, school, and the media (Lazar & Kramarae, 2011), gender discrimination and stereotypes are far from being "passé", as I demonstrated in my analysis of news media imagery in the previous chapter. Consequently, it is necessary to challenge naturalized gender ideologies and hegemonic definitions of masculinity that keep men and women from seeking the same opportunities.

In order to hear what women themselves have to say and to challenge gender assumptions, scholars (e.g. Kitzinger, 2000; Weatherall, 2012) have argued in favor of using conversation analysis (CA) in feminist research. Kitzinger (2000, p.169) notes that "feminism has always been deeply concerned with recovering women's own meanings and understandings about the world." This is why she argues that CA could be useful in representing feminist concerns. Indeed, CA's goal is to accurately capture people's voices and meanings (Kitzinger, 2000; Schegloff, 1997) through its focus on "micro" elements and through a detailed and systematic analysis of "talk-in-interaction". Although CA "purists" (cf. Cameron, 2001, p.88) do not investigate social, historical, and cultural factors beyond the data that they gather, others do take these factors into account in their analyses (e.g. the feminist perspective of Zimmerman & West, 1975). Yet, by focusing on the detailed analysis of turn-taking, CA may fail to "acknowledge the sociological and ideological assumptions contained within any research process" (Baxter, 2003, p.53), which, I argue, is a crucial aspect of discourse studies. Indeed, as I specified in Chapter 1 of this thesis, there has been a recent move towards more ethnographic and user-centered research, especially in digital discourse studies. As a consequence, media scholars have been focusing on issues related to the "social meanings" of communication in order to shed light on language and media ideologies, as recent edited volumes suggest (e.g. Burgess et al., 2018; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015; Sargent & Tagg, 2014; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, I believe that a

more critical approach is called for, one that CA fails to address.

In contrast to CA, critical discourse analysis (CDA) advocates a critical and emancipatory agenda. For example, *feminist* critical discourse analysis (FCDA) is a form of activism that aims to contest received ideologies and that promotes social justice and change (Lazar, 2014). More precisely, FCDA is an approach that "is concerned with the analysis of inequality and the way that discursive means are used to maintain the status quo" (Mills & Mullany, 2011, p.80). This chapter follows the critical agenda of FCDA as it seeks to explore how young female users of digital media discursively position themselves in regard to issues concerning gender and digital media. The need to raise awareness on matters related to gender and power is all the more important since one does not always notice relations of power at work and often takes them for granted, which is something Jennifer (28, HR assistant) from FG 2 remarked after closely analyzing the ways in which women were visually depicted using digital media:

Extract 5.1

Jennifer	"on remarque pas, c'est que quand t'analyses le truc que tu te rends compte que y'a un soucis"
	you don't notice it, it's only when you analyze it that you realize that there is a problem

Jennifer's sudden revelation concerning power asymmetries at work shows that we are surrounded by similar naturalized assumptions on a daily basis, and that critical work is needed in order to raise awareness and change the status quo. Similar to FCDA but going a step further, feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) takes a critical stance regarding gender inequality, but focuses rather on the exploration of "the complex and often ambiguous ways in which girls/women are simultaneously positioned as relatively powerless within certain discourses, but as relatively powerful within alternative and competing discourses" (Baxter, 2003, p.99), which is the approach I take in this chapter as I explore the ways in which young female digital media users "speak back" to news media discourse, from a feminist perspective.

Unlike (feminist) critical discourse analysis which explicitly seeks emancipation and social change, FPDA's main goal is not to change and transform, "although transformation may be a by-product of such analysis" (Sauntson, 2012, p.39). Rather, FPDA focuses on "the multiplicity of gendered subjectivities" and on "how gendered identities may shift and change, even across the same text or stretch of interaction" (Sauntson, 2012, p.39). This chapter thus follows the goals of feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis and so-called "third wave" feminism (Mills, 2012) in that it takes into account the heterogeneous nature of women as opposed to a universal perspective that views all women as victims of patriarchal oppression. Moreover, FPDA understands gender in terms of social constructivist terms instead of essentialist terms, and as such, aligns with a post-structuralist tradition that recognizes that social meanings are never fixed but are rather constantly negotiated in discourse. A feminist post-structuralist discourse analytical approach is particularly relevant in this chapter because

> It involves highlighting key discourses on gender as they are negotiated and performed within specific, localised contexts. It also involves making sense of the ways in which these discourses position female speakers (in particular) as relatively powerful, powerless, or a combination of both. It acknowledges the complexities, ambiguities and differences in the experiences of particular female speakers, as well as focusing on the possibilities for resistance and reinterpretation of social practices. (Baxter, 2003, p.66)

Following Baxter (2003), my goal is to take a bottom-up approach to discourse while exploring context-dependent gender issues and to avoid making generalizations about women and gender. Moreover, I do not wish to focus on the victimization and oppression of women; rather, I aim to investigate the ways in which women are at times positioned as powerful and at other times as powerless, within different discourses, and how they show resistance to dominant discourses. Though women and girls are often "silenced" by dominant discourses propagated in the news media, they are not uniformly powerless, as I will contend in my analysis. Although some of the same ideas circulate among the participants, they cannot be reduced to one single meaning, but rather multiple meanings and identities as female speakers co-construct different and competing identities for themselves through language and discourse. Therefore, meaning is never fixed (see Derrida, 1976; Foucault, 1972) which is what I am arguing in my analysis of the discourse of

young females users of digital media as they "speak back" to the news media's "regime of truth" regarding gender and digital media.

Although media discourse about digital media tends to construct a reductionist "regime of truth" regarding the ways women and girls use – or are supposed to use – digital media (cf. Chapter 4), feminist strategies and activism concerning (digital) media is on the rise (see Harp et. al, 2018). Before delving into feminist media scholarship, it is important to define what I mean by "feminism". In this thesis, I understand "feminism" as "a form of attention, a lens that brings into focus particular questions" (Fox Keller, 1985, p.6). More specifically, I follow Bucholtz's (2014, p.23) definition of "feminism" as "a diverse and sometimes conflicting set of theoretical, methodological, and political perspectives that have in common a commitment to understanding and challenging social inequalities related to gender and sexuality". Although feminist scholarship generally seeks to end social inequalities with regards to gender, I do not follow "second-wave" or "modernist feminism" (cf. Mills, 2012) which considers *gender* to be the main factor shaping women and femaleness, which agrees with the universalization of women, and which mainly seeks to resist patriarchal domination while gearing towards emancipation. As bell hooks (1989, p.22) puts it, "feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms". In other words, feminist research should acknowledge the multiple facets of a woman's identity, and view gender as interconnected with other identity markers such as sex(uality), class, race, age, and culture (e.g. Baxter, 2003; Butler, 1990; hooks, 1989; Lazar, 2014). Such a perspective views a woman's identity as heterogeneous, and aligns with the concept of "intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1989). In this chapter, I thus follow a contemporary definition of feminism that addresses the "multiplicity of women's identities" (Baxter, 2003, p.5), which is crucial in order to understand that "gender oppression is neither materially experienced nor discursively enacted in the same way for women everywhere" (Lazar, 2014, p.189). Furthermore, I specifically focus on one key concern of feminist scholars: media discourse, and the ways in which the media negotiates and defines gender (roles). As such, I follow the tradition of

feminist media scholarship (see more in Chapter 1), an "umbrella concept encompassing multiple practices that theorize about the status of women and the nature of gender in mediated messages and practices" (Bachmann et al., 2018, p.3). While Chapter 4 explored the news media's definition and construction of gender, this chapter focuses rather on the news media's messages and the way their audience receives them.

Over the past 50 years, feminist media scholarship has evolved to encompass a wide range of perspectives and foci, from research focusing on representation, traditional gender roles, emancipation and liberation, to a focus on intersectionality and the heterogeneous nature of women, as well as an understanding of gender as a social construction (see Bachmann et al., 2018). It is with second-wave feminist media studies that scholars started to focus on women's *representation* in the media and the gender ideologies that shaped these representations (e.g. Goffman, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Second-wave feminist studies were mainly quantitative in nature and explored the underrepresentation/absence of women in the media as well as stereotypical depictions of women as sexual objects, mothers, and victims, which supposedly prevented women from obtaining the same rights as men. In sum, according to Steiner (2014, p.361), early second-wave studies assumed that "depictions of women (and girls) result from, reflect, and reproduce dominant ideologies". However, in the 1980s and 1990s, third-wave feminist media scholarship began addressing an important issue that early studies had failed to consider: the plural and diverse nature of women's identities. As a result, the latest feminist media research takes into account the concept of "intersectionality" (cf. Crenshaw, 1989) which recognizes that other identity markers besides for gender, such as race, sexuality, ethnicity, and class, are important in shaping women's lives and experiences (e.g. Fisher, 2018; Lopez, 2018). As contemporary feminist media scholars move away from a focus on patriarchal and hegemonic media messages and the desire to grant women certain rights (Bachmann et al., 2018), they turn to "more complex models of spectatorship" (Steiner, 2014, p.367) and have started investigating the *active* role that women take in order to make themselves heard. More recently, feminist media scholarship has explored the

possibility of promoting social change and empowering women through political activism via social media platforms (e.g. Chen et al., 2018; Dixon, 2014; Keller et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2018; Thrift, 2014). As I argued in the beginning of this introduction, recent feminist media studies have investigated women who "speak out" and how this can challenge the status quo. With this in mind, I follow other feminist media scholars (e.g. Bachmann & Loke, 2018; Byerly, 2016; Cerqueira et al., 2016) who attempt to understand and challenge the current politics of gender and the media. Thus, in this chapter, I allow young female users of digital media to use their own voices to "speak back" to problematic gendered discourses. Then, I critically examine what they have to say in response to the news media's visual representations of "themselves". In line with critical discourse analysis and feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis, I address the following research questions:

1) What discursive strategies do "wired women" use to respond to the news media's gendered representations of women and digital media?
2) How do they (re)produce and/or challenge gender ideologies?

In other words, I wish to examine how women position themselves vis-à-vis certain discourses (i.e. as powerful or powerless) and the ways in which they resist and/or take up dominant social discourses.

Research design

In order to demonstrate how women "speak back", I used the empirical evidence from my news discourse analysis as a stimulus in four focus groups conducted with young female users of digital media. In this way, I examine the complex intersection of top-down cultural discourses and bottom-up social meanings and/or practices. My goal is to gain insight into how young women in the different groups perceive an issue (i.e. the news media's linguistic and visual discourses regarding digital communication technologies). In the previous chapter, I examined how news

media discourse about digital media constructs a particular "regime of truth" about the ways women and girls use – or "should" use – digital media. For instance, I analyzed a large database of international newspaper reports, outlining the most commonly found gendered stereotypes both linguistically and visually. I remarked that a majority of news media images focus on young women (teen girls and 18-30 year-old women) with digital devices (as opposed to men with digital devices) and that these women are depicted in very narrow visual terms. As a result, I wanted to see what young women themselves (as actual users) think about the news media's visual representations of them.

I set the following "screens" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p.88) for each group: Participants had to be women (screen 1), between the ages of 18 and 30 (screen 2), and had to own and use a smartphone (screen 3). Moreover, it was important that the participants in each group knew each other so that they would feel comfortable sharing their opinion in front of their group members. Indeed, "some mixes of participants do not work well because of limited understanding of other lifestyles and situations" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p.81). It was therefore crucial to find the right balance between enough variation within the group (e.g. different occupations and levels of education) and homogeneity.

Since I expected participants to feel passionately about the topic being discussed, I set the size of the focus groups at between 4 and 6 people so that participants would have ample opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. The ideal size of focus groups typically depends on a range of factors (e.g. purpose of study, topic, participants' level of expertise, etc.). However, if participants "are likely to have strong feelings about the topic, then the group size should be restricted to five or six people" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p.82). To recruit participants, I used the "snowball sample". I first asked a 24-year-old woman (Jane – not her real name) and a 28 year-old woman (Sophie – not her real name) (who both own and use a smartphone) if they knew other women who would meet the "screens" I had set. The logic of the snowball sample "is that people know people like themselves" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p.84). Since the initial contact was made

with two potential participants (Jane and Sophie), I conducted the focus groups in a convenient location for them and the people they found. This is why I met them in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, where they are all from. The duration of each focus group was about 1 hour. The focus groups were conducted in French, which is my preferred language. As a communication researcher based in Switzerland who speaks French fluently, I felt the need to deepen my knowledge about a specific French-speaking community in Switzerland. Also, no similar study has been conducted in French, which is one of the national languages of Switzerland and one of the languages of the SNF-funded project of which this thesis is a part.

For your reference, I display Table 1.4 (cf. Chapter 1) below with the names (pseudonyms) of the participants of each focus group, their age and profession, as well as the location, date, and duration of each focus group. [22]

Focus group 1 (FG 1)	**Focus group 2 (FG 2)**
Location: Martigny, Valais, Switzerland Date: 21 May 2018 Duration: 1:01:11	Location: Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland Date: 28 May 2018 Duration: 57:15
1. Julie, 24, a marketing assistant 2. Cindy, 24, a social worker 3. Melanie, 24, an insurance agent 4. Anna, 25, a physical therapist 5. Tania, 24, a beautician	1. Jennifer, 28, an HR assistant 2. Sophie, 28, a university assistant 3. Sandra, 28, a management consultant 4. Tiffany, 28, a management consultant
Focus group 3 (FG 3)	**Focus group 4 (FG 4)**
Location: Vernayaz, Valais, Switzerland Date: 26 May 2018 Duration: 1:01:55	Location: Martigny, Valais, Switzerland Date: 1 June 2018 Duration: 58:10
1. Charlotte, 19, a student 2. Veronica, 19, a student 3. Samantha, 18, an apprentice employee 4. Julie, 22, a commercial employee 5. Adelina, 23, a teacher	1. Pauline, 30, a makeup artist 2. Ines, 30, a social worker 3. Aline, 30, a social worker 4. Janice, 30, a graphic designer

Table 1.4: List of participants in each focus group

My analytical process is inspired by the classical approach to focus group analysis (cf. Krueger & Casey, 2015): (1) cutting and sorting participants' quotes, (2) examining recurrent themes (3) interpreting. After listening to the recordings of the four focus groups, I began by loosely transcribing the data (see Appendix I for the transcription conventions that I followed). This allowed me to go through the recorded data and sort participants' quotes into recurrent themes. In my analysis, I closely explore the concept of "stance" (Du Bois, 2007), "a uniquely productive way of conceptualizing the processes of indexicalization that are the link between individual

performance and social meaning" (Jaffe, 2009, p.4). I closely analyze multiple transcripts from the four focus groups that exemplify the ways in which different discourses connect and compete, following the feminist post-structuralist approach that explores the *intertextualization* of discourses. I show that while women are portrayed in reductionist ways by dominant social discourses in the news media (cf. Chapter 4), they are not necessarily all powerless and victimized at all times. Rather, the female participants of the focus groups position themselves – as they speak back to news media discourse – in various ways, at times as powerful, and at other times as powerless. This also shows how they, as speakers, index different social identities through stances.

As I specified in Chapter 1, the questions that I asked served as triggers that sparked conversations and debates between the participants. Those questions not only concerned the representations of women and men using digital media in news media imagery, but also more general media ideologies as they discussed issues related to digital addiction and children's digital media use. For the purposes of this chapter, I only discuss their answers to questions 4 through 8, which specifically and exclusively concern gender ideologies (see the complete questionnaire in Appendix C). I am especially interested in the way the participants speak back to the news media's visual representation of women (and men) using digital media, which is why my analysis focuses on questions 6 and 7. Question 6 concerns the participants' reaction to images representing women, and question 7 to images representing men. As a starting point, I selected four typical news media images of men and women using digital media. The examples I chose are not necessarily representative of all of the images from the dataset, but they are typical examples of the ways in which the news media represents men and women using digital media. Below are the images that the participants saw and reacted to.

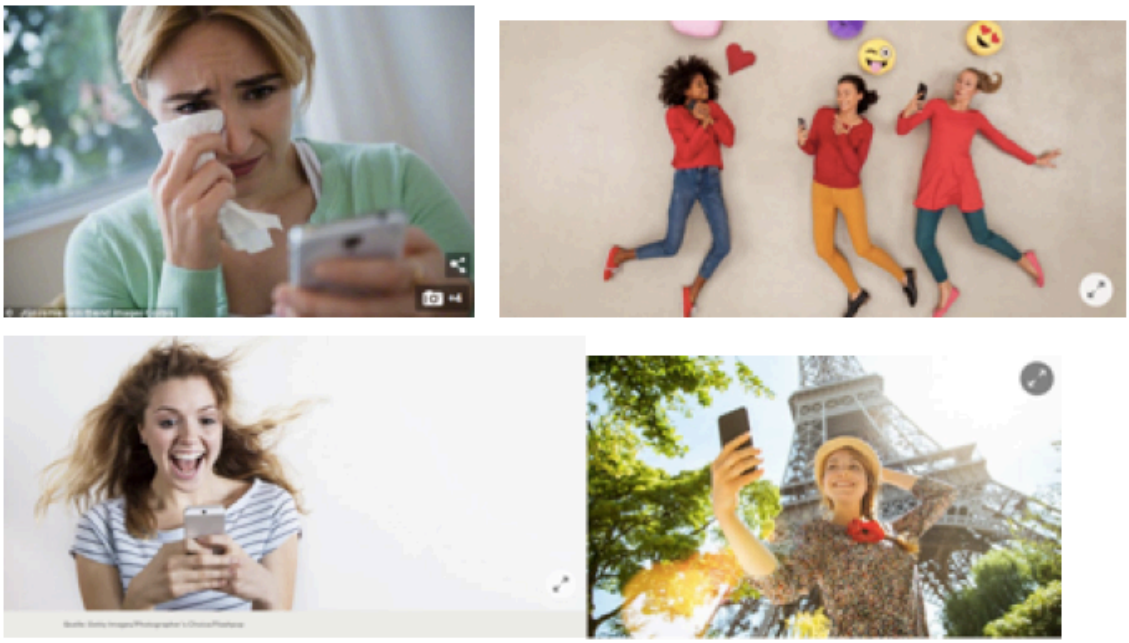

Figure 5.1: Collage of news media images representing women using digital devices

Figure 5.2: Collage of news media images representing men using digital devices

Analysis: Gendered social meanings

Theme 1: Challenging gender ideologies

First, I explore the participants' opinions regarding men and women's use of digital media *before* they saw the images, and argue whether or not these are the same as their responses to the news media's images. I show that the participants challenge received ideologies and attempt to negotiate their meanings about gender and digital media by discussing their "actual" use of digital media. In order to elucidate this argument, I offer the following extract:

Extract 5.2

From FG 1(24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: Do you think women and men use digital media the same way?

1	Jane (24)	Alors lui en tous cas, 'fin (0.2) et même j'ai l'impression que les gars c'est beaucoup les
2		euh (0.3) ben c'est les 'fin lui ouais, les jeux =
3	Melanie (24)	= le sport
4	Jane	et les groupes nous c'est c'qu'on disait
5	Melanie	mmh
6	Jane	sur WhatsApp si tu compares d'autres groupes, de conversations de filles et leurs
7		groupes, eux ils s'envoient toute la journée des conneries
8	Tania (24)	ouais ben moi j'suis dans le groupe des gars de Vernay maintenant [j'ai tout le temps
9		des messages
10	Jane	[ben justement? eux ils parlent tout le temps tandis que nous on parle genre on s'voit
11		ci on s'voit là on s'voit =
12	Tania	= pis y'en a trois qui répondent sur sept
13	Jane	pis les photos c'est plus nous que eux
14	Tania	((laughs))
15	Jane	genre moi, Frederic au bout de dix photos il (2.0)
16	Anna	alors moi j'suis Frederic par rapport à ça
17	Tania	moi aussi
18	Anna (25)	[casser les bonbons]
19	Tania	[par contre Lucas] lui toute la journée il prend des photos, pis des fois on f'sait à
20		l'époque quand on faisait des balades? ben il restait dix minutes au même endroit il
21		essayait de prendre une photo d'la du même truc mais dans un angle différent et
22		franchement ça prenait une blinde
23	Jane	(il a vingt ans)
24	Tania	une blinde
25	Melanie	un plinde?
26	Anna	une blinde
27	Jane	donc en fait là on a pas un point (0.2) genre moi j'trouve que, lui il est plus pour les
28		jeux (1.1) et quand il geek, il geek pas en fait il est sur WhatsApp? et il écoute d'la
29		musique (0.3) mais tu vois genre il geek jamais sur instagram

1	*Jane (24)*	*well for him anyway, well (0.2) I even have a feeling that for guys it's more*
2		*uh (0.3) well it's yeah gaming=*
3	*Melanie (24)*	*=sports*
4	*Jane*	*and as far as groups that's what we said*
5	*Melanie*	*mmh*
6	*Jane*	*on WhatsApp if you compare other girls' conversation groups and their*
7		*groups, they send each other bullshit all day long*
8	*Tania (24)*	*well now I'm in a group with guys from Vernayaz and [I always get*
9		*messages*
10	*Jane*	*[exactly? They're constantly talking while us we say like we see each other here we see each other there*
11		*we see=*
12	*Tania*	*=and three out of seven reply*
13	*Jane*	*and pictures it's more us than them*
14	*Tania*	*((laughs))*
15	*Jane*	*like me, Frederic after 10 minutes he (2.0)*
16	*Anna (25)*	*well I'm Frederic as far as that goes*
17	*Tania*	*me too*
18	*Anna*	*[annoying]*
19	*Tania*	*[on the other hand Lucas] takes pictures all day long, and sometimes when we used to take*

20		*walks in the past well he used to stay in the same spot for 10 minutes*
21		*he would try to take a photo of the same thing but from different angles*
22		*and frankly it would take une blinde (expression that means 'a while')*
23	*Jane*	*(he's twenty)*
24	*Tania*	*une bline*
25	*Melanie*	*une plinde*
26	*Anna*	*une blinde*
27	*Jane*	*okay so we don't actually have a point (0.2) like I think that he is more fond of*
28		*games and when he geeks out, actually he doesn't geek out he's on WhatsApp? and he listens to*
29		*music (.) but you see like he never geeks out on Instagram*

Throughout Extract 5.2, the participants are seen negotiating a gendering of digital media. Here, digital media practices are not necessarily gendered, but are rather individualized by the participants. Jane (24, marketing assistant) (line 1) starts by generalizing about men's use of digital media by referring to a common belief: men tend to play more online games than women. However, at the end of the extract (lines 27-29) we understand that such a generalization about men's digital media use was made because she was thinking about her boyfriend, Frederic's, interest in gaming – it is understood that Frederic spends "too much" time playing games from Jane's descriptions elsewhere in the conversation. Then, Jane tries to generalize again while referring to WhatsApp groups (lines 6-7). She says that men "send each other bullshit all day long" (line 7). In order to support Jane's claim, Tania (24, beautician) provides a personal example where she explains that now that she is part of a group with her male friends, she constantly gets messages (lines 8-9). On line 13, Jane again generalizes about men and women's use of the built-in camera to take pictures when she says that regarding "photos it's more us than them". While she clearly creates a separation between us (women) and them (men) in her assumption, she then supports her claim with a personal example: her boyfriend Frederic's rare use of the photo app. Therefore, in the beginning of the discussion, there is a connection between universal claims about men and women's use of digital media and personal supportive examples. However, on lines 16-17, Tania and Anna (25, physical therapist) contradict Jane's claim that women tend to take more pictures than men. Anna says "Well I'm Frederic as far as that goes" (line 16), and Tania aligns with her friend when saying "me too" (line 17). Furthermore, Tania gives the example of her

boyfriend Lucas who actually takes more pictures than her (line 19). Although research has explored the gendering of digital media, for instance the fact that men play more online games than women (Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006) or that women tend to take more selfies than men (Dhir et al., 2016), it is important to understand that gender is a mediated experience that is constructed in discourse (Dow, 2006). The meaning of gender is constantly negotiated and renegotiated in discursive practices, which is what happens with the disalignment from line 16 on, when Anna says "I'm Frederic as far as that goes". Here, she takes a specific stance and takes on the role of a man; she "is" a man. She discursively rejects the essentialist perspective of gender when it comes to digital media practices, and positions herself as similar to a man. Line 16 is particularly revealing because it shows a turning point in this specific discursive example where meanings compete and where the participants start to realize that differences in digital media practices are not solely due to gender. Indeed, Jane recognizes on line 27 that they are not able to agree on a common universal argument regarding men and women's digital media use. In fact, as Fairclough (2003, p.46) argues, the "universalization of a particular" is what makes/creates hegemony and background assumptions, a process that I explained in more detail in the previous chapter. The news media tends to universalize gender stereotypes and as a consequence, to naturalize them. In Extract 5.2, Jane's persistence in coming up with universal claims is not successful; her argument is contradicted by Anna and Tania's personal examples, which show that all men and all women are not all alike when it comes to digital media use, and which goes against the media's shaping of a single "preferred" meaning (cf. Hall, 1997). Gender differences in digital communicative practices should not be seen as inherent to women or men, and gender should not be seen as the only variable influencing communicative differences. In fact, a little further in the conversation (cf. Extract 5.3 below), Melanie (24, insurance agent) (line 1-2) actually suggests that differences between men and women's digital media use are not necessarily gender-related but rather personality-related:

Extract 5.3

From FG 1(24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: Do you think women and men use digital media the same way?

1	Melanie (24)	Mais après tu penses pas que c'est pas une question de genre [mais qu'c'est une
2		question de personnalité
3	Jane (24)	[ouais
4	Anna (25)	[ouais j'pense]
5	Cindy (24)	[ouais]
6	Jane	[ouais j'pense] ( )
7	Melanie	que tu peux pas catégoriser les genres
8	Jane	ouais
9		(1.0)
10	Jane	[non c'est vrai comme là on a dit on a toutes des cas différents là
11	Melanie	[ptêtre pas pour ça mais après pour d'autres choses
12	Anna	ben ouais
13	Jane	°toi tu dis quoi? (0.2) t'es en train d'te comparer avec =
14	Tania (24)	=il a un téléphone avec internet?
15	Anna	((laughs))
16	Cindy	j'crois pas que ce soit une référence, à tout ça
17	Jane	((laughs))
18	Cindy	Non mais j- j'pense que c'est clair que au niveau des genres y'aura (0.3) ptêtre euh
19		(0.2) ils f'ront pas du shopping, euh ils utiliseront pas la même chose (0.1) que, que la
20		tendance des femmes, mais après en terme d'utilisation? j'pense pas que ce soit au
21		niveau des genres plus que ce soit au niveau de l'intérêt [ou d'la personnalité]=
22	Melanie	[le personnel ouais la personnalité quoi]
23	Cindy	=Flo il utilise [pas quoi]=
24	Anna	[complètement]
25	Cindy	=moi j'utilise beaucoup plus que lui à côté de lui (0.3) pis je- dans son réseau
26		y'a beaucoup de gens qui utilisent pas
27	Melanie	ouais
28	Cindy	donc j'pense que
29	Jane	c'est l'réseau non c'est vrai c'est ta manière d'être
30	Cindy	c'est la personnalité des gens pis leurs leurs valeurs j'en sais

1	*Melanie (24)*	*but then don't you think that it's not a question of gender [but that it's a question*
2		*of personality*
3	*Jane (24)*	*[yeah*
4	*Anna (25)*	*[yeah I think so]*
5	*Cindy (24)*	*[yeah]*
6	*Jane*	*[yeah I think so] ( )*
7	*Melanie*	*that you can't categorize people*
8	*Jane*	*ouais*
9		*(1.0)*
10	*Jane*	*[no it's true like we just said we all have different examples here*
11	*Melanie*	*[maybe not for that but with other things*
12	*Anna*	*well yeah*
13	*Jane*	*°what are you saying? (0.2) are you comparing yourself with=*
14	*Tania (24)*	*=does he have a telephone with the internet?*
15	*Anna*	*((laughs))*
16	*Cindy*	*I don't think he's the best example for all of that*
17	*Jane*	*((laughs))*
18	*Cindy*	*no but I think that as far as gender there will be (0.3) maybe uh*

19		*(0.2) they might not go shopping, uh they won't use the same things (0.1) that that*
20		*women tend to, but then when it comes to use? I don't think it's about*
21		*gender but rather about interest [or personality]=*
22	*Melanie*	*[the personal yeah personality]*
23	*Cindy*	*=Flo he [doesn't use it]*
24	*Anna*	*[totally]*
25	*Cindy*	*=I use it much more compared to him (0.3) and I- in his network*
26		*there are a lot of people who don't use it*
27	*Melanie*	*yeah*
28	*Cindy*	*so I think*
29	*Jane*	*it's the network no it's true it's who you are*
30	*Cindy*	*it's people's personality and their values I don't know*

After Melanie makes her claim, other participants such as Jane (24, marketing assistant) and Cindy (24, social worker) back her up. After arguing about men and women's digital media use and universal differences, and telling personal stories and anecdotes, the participants realize that there are other important factors such as "personality" (lines 2, 22, and 30), "who you are" (line 29), "values" (line 30), and "interest" (line 21) that account for differences between people, and that gender is not necessarily the only factor. The *intersectional* (cf. Crenshaw, 1989) characteristic of digital media use and differences is actually a recurrent theme in the four focus groups, as the following examples demonstrate.

Extract 5.4

From FG 2(28 year-old women)
Trigger question: Do you think women and men use digital media the same way?

Jennifer (28) j'pense que ça dépend des gens en fait
y'a des gars qui sont plus accros que d'autres

I think it depends on the person actually
there are guys who are more addicted than others

Extract 5.5

From FG 4(30 year-old women)
Trigger question: Do you think women and men use digital media the same way?

Pauline (30) entre chaque individu c'est différent

between each individual it's different

The participants' answers show that differences concerning digital media use are more related to the person and their particularities and not to their gender. In sum, my participants' perspective on men and women's digital media practices *before* seeing the news media images reveals their understanding of intersectionality and of the fact that "men" and "women" cannot be placed into universal categories, as in the post-structuralist view. Their discourse contradicts and challenges the news media' tendency to shape their audience's perspective around hegemonic definitions of masculinities. In fact, their discourse contradicts the uniformly reductionist and essentialist picture that the news media paints (cf. Chapter 4). Furthermore, the female speakers position themselves as "equal" to men as far as their digital media practices are concerned; these women's identities as digital media users are not denigrated when compared to men's, and neither are their digital media practices. This is particularly important to note since after viewing the news media images, the female participants take a different position and view themselves as inferior/disempowered. When I asked the participants to tell me what digital devices they owned and for what purposes they used them (cf. ice-breaker question in Appendix C) their answers showed that their actual usage was varied, from leisure-purposes to work-purposes. For example, Anna (25, physical therapist) from FG 1 uses her laptop to pay her bills, to buy things, and to look things up about treatments for work. She also owns a smartphone that she uses for WhatsApp, Instagram, Skype, and the Harry Potter game. Sandra (28 management consultant), from FG 2 uses her iPhone for WhatsApp, LinkdIn, and personal emails, and she uses her laptop to pay her bills and book plane tickets. Adelina (23, teacher) from FG 3 uses her smartphone to play games, communicate, use social media, get information, read the newspaper, and she uses her laptop for work and to watch

movies. Finally, Ines (30, social worker) from FG 4 owns a smartphone that she uses for social media, a computer that she uses mostly to pay her bills, and a smartwatch for sports. All in all, the young women's use of digital media varies widely and is certainly not limited to "laughing alone with a smartphone" (cf. Chapter 4).

Theme 2: (Dis)empowering women through (dis)association

Despite the fact that the women in my focus groups favorably compared their digital media use with that of men's, after viewing the news media images depicting women's digital media practices, my participants discursively positioned themselves as powerless and inferior. They did so by (dis)associating themselves from the news media's visualized gender stereotypes and received notions of what a woman (using digital media) is/should be like. The women's (dis)associating happened as they tried to negotiate and challenge hegemonic masculinity. In order to demonstrate the discourse of (dis)association at work, I explore the various rhetorical tactics the young women employ, such as stancetaking, shifting of personal pronouns, and the notion of "enregistered voice" (Agha, 2005).

The first rhetorical tactic I explore concerns the ways in which the young female participants use stances to discuss the images portraying women using digital media as exaggerated, staged, and cliché, and as such as unnatural and unrelatable, which I argue is a means of disassociating from the images. Extract 5.6 below came immediately after I showed the participants images portraying women and girls with digital devices (cf. question 6 in Appendix C). I asked them to tell me what they thought of these representations.

Extract 5.6

From FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these women doing? How are they represented?

1	Melanie (24)	Oh mais les clichés
2	Anna (25)	((laughs))
3	Melanie	tu pleures tu fais la cretchanne
4	Anna	en même temps tu vois un mec qui qui ( ) ça fait (0.2) [ah! elle m'a écrit!
5	Jane (24)	[la dernière on a fait la même chose
6	Tania (24)	hein?
7	Jane	en bas t'as vu on a fait la même chose
8	Tania	ah oui on a fait la même photo
9	Jane	avec le chapeau aussi
10	Tania	mais on était pas toute seule
11	Jane	((laughs))
12	Tania	on était deux
13	Cindy (24)	t'as t'as pour comparer le le type de photos pour les hommes qui ai mises
14	Moderator	oui pour la prochai- ouais la prochaine question ouais
15	Tania	va pas trop vite (1.0) brûle pas les étapes
16	Anna	mais c'est juste c'est une bonne question
17	Tania	((laughs))
18	Moderator	alors qu'est-ce qu'elles font 'fin elles font quoi ces ces femmes là
19	Tania	elles font les idiotes
20	Someone	((laughs))
21	Jane	c'est pas forcément les idiotes mais c'est l'cliché du selfie moi j'trouve=
22	Tania	=non mais y'a pas que le selfie si tu r'gardes [la photo]
23	Melanie	[celle qui pleurniche]
24		(2.5)
25	Tania	le groupe de filles avec les emoticônes au d'ssus d'la tête euh
26	Anna	ah non ça c'est too much
27		(1.0)
28	Jane	↑ bon surtout ↓ moi j'trouve c'est euh
29	Tania	elles sont couchées par terre en plus?
30	Jane	c'est surjoué en tout cas
31	Tania	oui
32	Jane	j'sais pas si les mecs c'est pareil
33	Anna	de toute façon
34	Tania	moi j'ai jamais pleuré comme ça d'ma- personnellement [mais, avec un mouchoir
35		sous l'œil]
36	Jane	[oui et pis tu]
37	Cindy	après y'a un côté j'sais pas mais (0.5) la femme c'est plus à l'image de c'qui est plus
38		émotif ou plus euh (0.2) [j'sais pas ( ) comme ça=
39	Anna	[exubérant
40	Cindy	=oui mais pas qu'au sens négatif alors voilà oui peut-être que si on veut voir le
41		négatif on l'voit mais l'côté vivant l'côté euh euh les hommes on pourrait voir pareil
42		finalement sauf qu'un gars en colère mais, j'sais pas après au niveau euh (0.5) moi ça
43		me choque pas plus que ça parce- c'est normal qu'une pub (0.4) ou une photo pour
44		être accrocheuse elle doit exagérer [si c'est
45	Jane	[ouais
46	Cindy	on n'aime pas avoir tout le temps des photos (0.3) euh qui représentent que le naturel
47		parce que autrement

1	*Melanie (24)*	*oh the clichés*
2	*Anna (25)*	*((laughs))*
3	*Melanie*	*you whine you act ditzy*
4	*Anna*	*and you can see a guy who who ( ) it looks like (0.2) [ah! She texted me!*
5	*Jane (24)*	*[the last one we did the same thing*
6	*Tania (24)*	*uh?*
7	*Jane*	*on the bottom did you see we did the same thing*
8	*Tania*	*oh yeah we took the same picture*
9	*Jane*	*with the hat as well*
10	*Tania*	*but we were not alone*
11	*Jane*	*((laughs))*
12	*Tania*	*there were two of us*
13	*Cindy (24)*	*do you do you have the type of photos of men to compare*
14	*Moderator*	*yes for the next for the next question yeah*
15	*Tania*	*don't go too fast (1.0) don't jump the gun*
16	*Anna*	*but you're right it's a good question*
17	*Tania*	*((laughs))*
18	*Moderator*	*so what are they doing well what are these women doing?*
19	*Tania*	*they are acting stupid*
20	*Someone*	*((laughs))*
21	*Jane*	*they don't necessarily look stupid but it's more about selfie stereotypes I think=*
22	*Tania*	*=no but it's not only about the selfie if you look at [the picture]*
23	*Melanie*	*[the one who's whining]*
24		*(2.5)*
25	*Tania*	*the group of girls with the emoticons on top of their heads uh*
26	*Anna*	*oh no this is too much*
27		*(1.0)*
28	*Jane*	*↑ well mostly ↓ I think this is uh*
29	*Tania*	*they are also laying on the floor?*
30	*Jane*	*it's overacted in any case*
31	*Tania*	*yes*
32	*Jane*	*I don't know if it's the same with guys*
33	*Anna*	*anyway*
34	*Tania*	*I've never cried like that in my- personally [but, with*
35		*a tissue under the eye]*
36	*Jane*	*[and and you]*
37	*Cindy*	*but then there's a side of things I don't know but (0.5) women are more associated with what's more*
38		*emotional or more uh (0.2) [I don't know ( ) like that=*
39	*Anna*	*[cheerful*
40	*Cindy*	*=yes but not only from a negative perspective so yes maybe if you want to see what's negative you can*
41		*see it but the lively side uh uh with men you could see the same thing except with an angry man,*
42		*I don't know then when it comes to uh (0.5) for me I don't find it*
43		*shocking because I find it normal that an ad or a*
44		*photo in order to be attractive it needs to exaggerate [if it's*
45	*Jane*	*[yeah*
46	*Cindy*	*you don't always want to see photos (0.3) um that represent the real*
47		*because then*

Extract 5.6 demonstrates how the participants' stancetaking is indexical of higher-order social meanings; in this case, it shows their disassociation from the news media images. In their discourse, the young women evaluate news media images as exaggerated and thus unrelatable;

in doing so, they position themselves in a particular way with regards to the object of discussion and the other speakers. When Jane (24, marketing assistant) says that the images are *surjoué* "overacted" (line 30) she positions herself subjectively (through the use of the "double" first person pronoun *moi je*) via an evaluative stance (i.e. *surjoué* "overacted") and an epistemic stance (i.e. *je pense* "I think"). Here, the epistemic stance constructed with the mental predicate *pense* ("think") serves to show a certain commitment and to strengthen the argument, especially with the words *surtout* "mostly" and *en tout cas* "in any case" which strongly support Jane's statement. Jane thus strongly implies that the images are exaggerated and not representative of who women really are and of their digital media use. In other words, she is saying that these images are not representative of reality, and as such she creates a distance between herself and the images and disassociates with them.

Moreover, when Tania (24, beautician) claims "I've never cried like that" (line 34), she takes an epistemic categorical/extreme position through the use of "never" which emphasizes a clear separation between the woman depicted in the image and herself. In the same vein, Tania rejects common associations between women and extreme feelings and emotions and positions herself in the margins of such universal and essentialist beliefs. In other words, Tania rejects the essentialist view which enacts "an understanding of gender differences as innate and rooted in biological and psychological underpinnings" (Marwick, 2014, p.63). Here, Tania challenges and renegotiates news media discourse which shows women and girls that it is normal for them to use digital media while being exaggeratedly expressive and emotional, because these are supposedly inherent female characteristics. She does so while disassociating herself from the images and implying that crying is not an inherent female feature.

The exaggerated quality of the images is further discussed on line 29, when Tania says "they are laying on the floor to top that off", implying that as if being stereotypically and exaggeratedly portrayed was not enough, these women had to be depicted laying on the floor in ridiculous, disempowering, and submissive positions. Tania's observation is a reminder that little

has changed with regards to the way women pose in photographs. Indeed, more than forty years ago, Goffman (1979) explored women's poses in advertisement and noticed "the ritualization of subordination" through their unnatural poses, which is also something Bell and Milic (2002, p.205) argued later in their study when they remarked that women were more often depicted "in spatially lower positions or recumbent on *floors* [emphasis mine] or bed". Moreover, the same idea of exaggeration is demonstrated on line 26 when Anna (25, physical therapist) states *ah non ça c'est too much*. The fact that she uses the English words *too much* in her French evaluation is revealing. This particular use of English does not fill a gap and is thus "unnecessary" in that she could well have used the French equivalent "trop" in order to convey her thoughts. In fact, in FG 3, Julie (22, commercial employee) describes the ways in which women are depicted and claims: *ouais c'est trop extrême pour les femmes j'trouve* (yeah it's too extreme for women I think), which shows that it is possible to convey the same meaning in French. This particular use of English is an instance of "core-borrowing" (cf. Myers-Scotton, 2006) where speakers resort to a loanword despite the fact that the word already exists in their language. Even though the use of *too much* in this case seems to be unnecessary, the use of English adds a stylistic function of precision to the statement (Galinsky, 1967). Anna's use of *ah non* in order to show rejection and disagreement combined with *too much* clearly creates a distance between the visual representations and herself. All in all, the women's evaluative and epistemic stances clearly demonstrate how the participants disassociate with the images.

In contrast, Cindy (24, social worker) is the only participant who does not completely agree with her friends. In terms of epistemic stance, she takes the role of the less knowledgable one, whereas the others take the role of the more knowledgable. For instance, Cindy says "I don't know" three times (lines 37, 38, and 42), which is a way for her to distance herself from her opinion and position herself as less serious, unsure, and powerless in order to "save her face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1955) and not offend the others. Cindy's uncertainty is further evidenced on line 40 when she says "yes but", presenting herself as not totally against the

others' opinion. Because Cindy is the only one with a different opinion, her epistemic stance demonstrates her wish to be accepted by the others while detaching herself from her belief. Cindy's disagreement with her friends concerns her reaction to the common association between women and exaggerated expressions. Although she agrees that the images are exaggerated, the visual representations do not shock her. Indeed, she claims: "I don't find it shocking because I find it normal that an ad or a photo in order to be attractive it needs to exaggerate (…) you don't always want to see photos, um, that represent the real" (lines 42-47). By saying this, Cindy views the images as commodities and not as representations of reality; such images need to attract viewers/readers and sell. Therefore, she does not evaluate the images based on a truth scale (cf. Machin, 2007). In fact, here we see intertextuality (cf. Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, 1980) at work, and how Cindy's interpretation of the visual text is shaped by a neoliberal discourse. The interconnection between different texts shapes her understanding of the images, which is different from her friends' understanding. Cindy also shows awareness of the politics that govern these types of images (e.g. ads, news media images); she is aware that exaggeration is needed in order to sell (lines 43-44), which influences her unsurprised reaction. While Cindy's friends discursively position women using digital media as powerless in the news media's images, Cindy focuses on the positive aspect of depicting women as "lively" (line 41) and thus positions them as more powerful, following a post-feminist discourse (Lazar, 2014) that celebrates women's empowerment and liveliness. In any case, it is the essentialist characteristic commonly associated with women (emotional and expressive) that are criticized by most of the participants but praised by Cindy. Most of the participants disassociate from the images that are "too much", exaggerated, stereotypical, and which position women as powerless and ridiculous. They seem to be affected and bothered by the ways in which women using digital devices are ridiculed in the news media's depictions, and such a reaction is also evidenced in other focus groups. For instance, Jennifer (28, HR assistant) from FG 2 claims *ça m'énerve* "it annoys me" after seeing the ways in which women are depicted, and Janice (30 graphic designer) from FG 4

says *c'est un peu frustrant* "it's a little frustrating". On the other hand, Cindy associates with these news media's visual representations and focuses on the positive emotions displayed; she nonetheless distances herself from her opinion in order to save face. Cindy is not so much bothered by the ways in which women are depicted using digital media because her perspective is different and shows the intertextualization of other discourses such as post-feminism and neoliberalism. Cindy knows that images do not necessarily represent reality, which is why the representations do not bother her. However, across the four focus groups – and as Extract 5.5 demonstrates – young female participants tend to discursively challenge gender ideologies and *disassociate* (i.e. distance, detach, disconnect) with the news media's images while using evaluative stances of exaggeration and positioning themselves as knowledgeable. Still, as Extract 5.6 displays, visual texts are subject to multiple and subjective interpretations that show how social meanings compete and are negotiated, and how participants position themselves differently, at times as powerful, and at other times as powerless.

The next rhetorical tactics that emphasize the participants' distancing with the images is how the speakers position themselves through their use of personal pronouns and *enregistered voices* (Agha, 2005). I contend that the speakers' shifting between pronouns and their switching between different social voices are forms of stancetaking towards disassociation. Here, I do not focus on one longer specific extract, but I comment on multiple short descriptive extracts which have been removed from their surrounding textual context. All the extracts that are listed below come from the four focus groups and are descriptions of the images representing women and digital devices. The translations I provide in English are here for comprehensibility but cannot always capture the exact meaning of the original French expressions.

Extract 5.7

From FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these women doing? How are they represented?

Melanie (24) oh les clichés
tu pleures tu fais la **cretchane**

oh the clichés
you whine you act ditzy

Extract 5.8

From FG 2 (28 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

Tiffany (28) en fait nous on passe pour des **bobettes**

in fact we look like airheads

Extract 5.9

From FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these women doing? How are they represented?

Veronica (19) la pleurnicheuse, la olé olé

the whimpering, the funky

Extract 5.10

From FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

Veronica (19) là il est naturel il est il est content nous on s'dit tant mieux il a un bon un bon coup d'fil et pis c'est tout, tandis que la nana elle est obligée de faire (elle change sa voix et imite une fille 'stupide' rigoler) comme ça

here he looks natural he's he's happy and we're like good for him he just had a nice phone call and that's it, whereas the chick she's obliged to be like (she raises her voice and imitates a 'stupid girl' laughing)

Extract 5.11

From FG 4 (30 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

Pauline (30) ouais eux ça leur donne un ptit air intelligent et pis euh, concentré pis nous ça donne, ça nous donne un ptit air toc et

yeah for them it gives them a smart look and uh, focused and for us it give, it gives us a cuckoo/wacky look and

There is a tendency across the four focus groups to not only describe the women portrayed in the images negatively, but also to describe them using colloquialisms (underlined in the extracts) and words that come from the old "franco-provençal" language spoken in the canton of Valais, which is popularly referred to as "patois" (in bold in the extracts). [23] The extracts above exemplify what Agha (2005, p.39) calls *enregistered voices*, "the class of social voices linked to registers". When the female participants take up these social voices to describe the women portrayed in the images, they emphasize their belonging to a social group. These forms of stancetaking are acts of identity, and the choice to shift to patois is meaningful (see Labov, 1966 and Bell 1984 for the relevance of style shifting). Using the examples above, I demonstrate how the participants' speech (with a special focus on style shifting and pronoun shifiting) shows different degrees of identification with the images.

In extract 5.7, Melanie (24, insurance agent) diassociates herself from the women portrayed in the images by using a derogatory patois word and using the impersonal *tu* "you" to support her argument. Melanie is clearly annoyed by the clichéd representation of women as being either very emotional or acting dumb. She says: "oh the clichés", "you whine you act ditzy". Here, I am especially interested in her use of the patois word *cretchane*, which originated from the word "crétin" (stupid) (see Crétin, 1924). Melanie switches to patois in her statement, and as such, she positions herself, her audience, and the object of discussion through this particular social voice. More precisely, her use of the word *cretchane* – a word in patois that only other people from the canton of Valais would know – is a way for her to connect with her audience and for her audience to identify with her and her argument. Moreover, the use of the word *cretchane* bestows an insulting and inferior status upon the women in the images. However, through her use of the impersonal second-person pronoun *tu* "you", this act of identity is not only applicable to the women in the images, but is universalized and generalized to her audience and to *any* woman. Here, the personal pronoun *tu* is not a deictic and does not refer to anyone in particular. In fact, research (e.g. Kitagawa and Lehrer, 1990; Laberge and Sankoff, 1979; Myers and Lamprapoulou, 2012) has

shown that the use of the impersonal second person pronoun (e.g. in French and in English) can be used to make a general statement and present a fact as a shared perception among the audience. In this particular case, Melanie's use of the impersonal pronoun is a sort of epistemic stance that she uses to support her argument and include her audience. As such, Melanie positions the women in the images as well as any other woman (including herself and her female addressees) as powerless and victimized, through her use of the patois word *cretchane* and her use of the impersonal pronoun *tu*.

The powerlessness of the women portrayed is also revealed when Melanie says "you *act* [my emphasis] ditzy" and not "you *are* [my emphahsis] ditzy". This shows that according to her, what is cliché is not the idea that women *are* dumb, but the idea that women *act* ditzy/dumb. Being ditzy is not an essential characteristic of women, as the news media's images make it seem (cf. Chapter 4). The people who took the photos, staged them, and edited them have the power to shape meaning the way they want. In turn, the ones who are powerless are the women depicted, and Melanie shows it through her word *cretchane*, which confers on the women (any woman) an inferior status. Therefore, Melanie disidentifies with the images through her use of an offensive word to characterize the women depicted, but at the same time she identifies with them through her general and inclusive use of *tu*. This shows the complex and ambiguous process of disassociation the female participants experience, and how they challenge and renegotiate their gendered identities.

Similarly, in Extract 5.8, Tiffany (28, management consultant) employs the patois word *bobette* – which is the feminine form of *bobet*, a simpleton or airhead (see Bobet, 1924) – and through her use of the personal pronoun *on* (used here like "we"), she directly includes herself, her addressees and all women in her description of what women using digital media look like. By saying that women portrayed look like simpletons, Tiffany positions herself and her audience (through the use of *on*) as victimized and powerless. Furthermore, by claiming *on passe pour*, which literally means "we pass for", she implies that they, as women, are made to look as if they are

stupid, when in reality they are not. If someone *passe pour* an airhead, it means that s/he does not actually possess that quality. Likewise, Pauline (30, makeup artist) in Extract 5.11 uses the personal pronoun *nous* "we" to include herself and her female addressees in her description of women who have a wacky look, and as in Extract 5.7, she does not use the verb "to be" to characterize the women depicted and themselves but rather says "it gives us a wacky look". In other words, the way women are visually represented makes them (and every woman) look wacky; thus, women are passive objects denigrated by their portrayal. In both Extracts 5.8 and 5.11, it is the "powerful" people in the (stock) photo industry and news media industry who shape and create this particular meaning and gives women such a reductionist, powerless, and inferior identity. Tiffany and Pauline merely put words to these processes and remind us that the way women are visually depicted in images representing women and digital media is not essentialist but rather discursively produced (cf. Butler, 1990; Marwick, 2014). Although the participants imply that such representations are social constructions, they include themselves in their own negative descriptions through their use of *on* and *nous* which shows that they directly identify with the women depicted while positioning themselves and their friends as powerless and victimized.

Unlike the identification and inclusion process that results from the use of *tu*, *on*, and *nous* as detailed above, Veronica (19, student) (in Extract 5.9 and 5.10) is the one who disidentifies the most with the images. In Extract 5.9, Veronica does not use any personal pronoun nor any verb; she uses only the feminine definite article *la* and the colloquial nouns *pleurnicheuse* "whiner" and *olé olé* "careless/unserious". Here, Veronica merely evaluates each image and individualizes them instead of universalizing them by including all women. After seeing the images portraying men, Veronica (in Extract 5.10) mimics a "dumb girl" laugh for comedic effect. Through paralinguistic cues (i.e. fake high-pitched laugh), she creates a sort of "alignment with voices indexed by speech and thus with social types of persons, real or imagined, whose voices [she] take[s] them to be" (Agha, 2005, p.38). In fact, Veronica is not making fun of "dumb girls" or the way dumb girls would laugh; rather, her "enregistered voice" is a way for her to condemn the way women using

digital media are visually depicted. She says "whereas the chick is obliged to do (hahaha) like that" (*tandis que la nana elle est obligée de faire (hahaha) comme ça)*. In both French and English, the use of "obliged" (*obligé)* is quite strong; here Veronica implies that the woman portrayed does not have a choice, she is forced to act the way she is, in a stupid way. This idea of "being forced to" is similar to what I revealed above regarding the passivity of women who "pass for"; it stresses the fact that women "undergo" instead of acting. However, Veronica does not necessarily include all women in her comment; her use of "she" is directed to the woman depicted in the image. Therefore, she takes a different position from the other participants and distances herself further from the images. She does not include herself in the description of women as powerless. She takes a more powerful position by distancing herself; this is a way for her to say "this is not me, this is not us".

In this section on discourse of (dis)association, I have shown how the participants discursively (dis)associate with the images, positioning themselves *and* the women in the images at times as powerless, and at other times as powerful (e.g. Cindy's comments about "lively" women), and showing different degrees of identification with the images. Importantly, although the participants unconsciously position themselves as powerless as women, in doing so they also condemn the fact that women are denigrated by reductionist portrayals and thus challenge the news media discourse. The female speakers thus embody two competing identities; they are powerless as digital media users, and powerful as women who condemn and challenge the status quo and who demonstrate critical awareness.

Theme 3: Empowering men

Whether the staged and exaggerated quality of the images upsets the participants or not, the women across the four focus groups mostly agree on the fact that the images of women are "cliché". However, as I will show, they do not describe the images of men in the same way. As we observed in Extract 5.6 above, the word *cliché* comes up twice in the focus group (lines 1 and 21) – the word *cliché* also appears in the other focus groups when the participants first see the portrayal

of women with digital devices. In Extract 5.6 above, everything seems to be cliché in these portrayals of women using digital media: the woman taking a selfie (line 21), the woman crying (line 34), and the use of emojis (line 25). These are stereotypes about female digital media users that the participants imply are untrue through their use of the word *cliché*. The participants criticize the stereotypical portrayal of women and girls in general, *and* specifically the stereotypical portrayal of women and girls' digital media practices. In both cases, women and girls are made to look unserious and ridiculous. The use of the word *cliché* to describe the news media's images of women and girls using digital media is particularly revealing when one considers the participants' reaction to the images portraying men using digital media. Indeed, in none of the focus groups did the female participants describe the visual representations of men with digital devices as "stereotypical", "cliché" or "exaggerated", although the images I showed them were quite stereotypical in their emphasis on men's "professional" identities. Such a stereotypical connection between work/public sphere and men is not surprising and has been studied elsewhere (e.g. Lazar, 2000). Although the participants do not use the words "stereotype" (*stereotype)* or "cliché" (*cliché)* when describing images of men, they nonetheless imply that the images are through their emphasis of work-related characteristics. For instance, right before I was about to show the participants the images of men and digital devices, Jennifer (28, HR assistant) from FG 2 said:

Extract 5.12

Jennifer (28)	je vois déjà l'truc genre le gars en costard sur son téléphone
	I can already imagine the thing, like, a guy in a suit on his phone

Then, when I showed the women of the four focus groups the images, they also indirectly categorized men in stereotypical ways, while omitting and ignoring the words "cliché" or "stereotype". This *erasure* (Irvine and Gal, 2000) of such words underscores the naturalization of gender ideologies, as I argue. The following extracts illustrate a typical response from FG 1, 2 and 4:

Extract 5.13

From FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

Tania (24)	ouais bon d'accord c'est les hommes [intelligents]
Melanie (24)	[pire sérieux] pire professionnel
Tania (24)	*yeah right okay it's [intelligent] men*
Melanie (24)	*[super serious] super professional*

Extract 5.14

From FG 2 (28 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

Sophie (28)	genre là c'est professionnel professionnel professionnel et le premier il est ptêtre sur skype
Sophie (28)	*like here it's professional, professional, professional and the first one he's maybe on skype*

Extract 5.15

From FG 4 (30 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

Aline (30)	ouais ça fait plus sérieux quand même (0.2) ça fait plus travail, technique euh, moins d'émotions (0.3) y'a pas d'émoticônes
Janice (30)	technologie
Aline (30)	*yeah it looks more serious (0.2) it's more work, technical uh, less emotions (0.3) there's no emoticons*
Janice (30)	*technology*

The descriptive adjectives and nouns (e.g. "suit" in Extract 5.12, "intelligent" in Extract 5.13, "professional" in Extract 5.14, "technical" and "technology" in Extract 5.15) used to evaluate the news media images emphasize the outdated but prevalent perception that men are more

professional than women, that they are indeed the breadwinners of their families whereas women belong to the private sphere with housework and children. Consequently, it is (working) men who exemplify qualities such as seriousness and intelligence as the extracts above demonstrate. Although we have witnessed major advances in regards to women's opportunities to pursue a career, they are still marginalized in certain fields such as sciences and IT, and discriminated against in the workplace (see Lazar 2014; Marwick, 2018). The evaluative stances that Tania (24, beautician) and Melanie (25, insurance agent) in Extract 5.13 and Sophie (28, university assistant) in Extract 5.14 offer in their descriptions of the news media's images are imbued with unconscious gender ideologies; it seems altogether natural – although annoying as the cynical "yeah right okay" in Extract 5.13 suggests – for these women to see images of serious and professional men, which is perhaps why they do not describe the images as stereotypical. As a result, the female speakers above take up and reproduce the news media's patriarchal discourse, which calls to mind Derrida's (1978) philosophy of 'phallocentrism', where binary oppositions such as men/women and superior/inferior are naturalized. More specifically, it is through the *erasure* of a linguistic feature that gender ideologies materialize in discourse. And as Lazar (2014, p.186) suggests, when gender ideologies are naturalized, it is hard to see relations of power at work. However, on closer inspection, one notices that the participants accept the news media's gender ideologies about men and digital media by *not* describing them as stereotypical; as a consequence, they recreate relations of power where the masculine is dominant and empowered, and thus identify themselves as powerless/disempowered as women.

Next, through the participants' descriptions of men and women's digital media practices in the news media's images, the participants recreate unequal relations of power between men and women in another way. The participants imply that women use digital media for unimportant or superficial matters, as the participants of FG 2 do in the following Extract 5.16 where I asked them if the "untypical" image of the man "flipping the script" (cf. Aiello & Woodhouse, 2016) was similar to the women's images. Here is the image they saw:

Figure 5.3: News media image of a man using a phone and a laptop (Article source: The Telegraph, UK, 2 March 2017

Extract 5.16

From FG 2 (28 year-old women)
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

1	Jennifer (28)	non pas du tout pas du tout
2	Tiffany (28)	pis là ça a l'air naturel alors que=
3	Jennifer	ouais
4	Tiffany	=avant c'était très [exagéré]
5	Sophie (28)	[exaggéré ouais]
6	Sophie	là euh disons qu'il communique (1.0) on sait [pas parce qu'il a pas parlé depuis trois
7		mois à un pote]
8	Jennifer	[il a un téléphone là c'est la vraie utilisation du téléphone]
9	Sophie	ouais, alors que nous on communique pour euh pour mettre des cœurs pis se raconter
10		des peines de cœur 'fin voilà en fait (0.3) donc euh lui il raconte un truc sérieux 'fin
11		(0.2) important ou j'en sais rien (1.2) même pas il parle à un ami qu'il a pas vu
12		pendant longtemps mais nous on se on s'apitoie sur notre sort
13	Jennifer	ouais c'est ça
14	Sophie	on est juste ridicules tu vois
15	Jennifer	ouais
16	Sophie	ben ouais
17	Jennifer	c'est nul
18		(2.0)
19	Sophie	ça t'énerve
20	Jennifer	ouais ça m'énerve
21	Sandra (28)	ah ouais
22	Jennifer	non mais et pis que les médias ils arrivent encore à faire ça 'fin
23	Everyone	mmh
24	Jennifer	on est en 2018 quoi

1	*Jennifer (28)*	*no not at all not at all*
2	*Tiffany (28)*	*and here it looks natural whereas=*
3	*Jennifer*	*yeah*
4	*Tiffany*	*=before it was very much [exaggerated]*
5	*Sophie (28)*	*[exaggerated yeah]*
6	*Sophie*	*here let's say he's communicating (1.0) we don't know [because he hasn't talked to a*
7		*friend in 3 months]*
8	*Jennifer*	*[he has a phone there it's the real use of a phone]*
9	*Sophie*	*yeah whereas us we communicate for uh to add hearts and tell each other*
10		*heartbreaks there you go (0.3) okay so he's saying something serious*
11		*(0.2) important or I don't know (1.2) not even he's talking to a friend he hasn't seen*
12		*in a while whereas us we feel sorry for ourselves*
13	*Jennifer*	*yeah right yeah*
14	*Sophie*	*we just look ridiculous*
15	*Jennifer*	*yeah*
16	*Sophie*	*yeah right*
17	*Jennifer*	*it sucks*
18		*(2.0)*
19	*Sophie*	*it's annoying you*
20	*Jennifer*	*yeah it annoys me*
21	*Sandra (28)*	*ah yeah*
22	*Jennifer*	*no but and the fact that the media can do that*
23	*Everyone*	*mmmm*
24	*Jennifer*	*it's 2018 dammit*

Here again, Tiffany (28, management consultant) (line 2) emphasizes the perceived dichotomy between men's and women's use of digital media as natural and real for men, and exaggerated and fake for women. But more importantly, Jennifer (28, HR assistant) (line 8) highlights the "affordances" (Gibson, 1986) of digital media when she claims that the man's use of the phone is "the *real* [my emphasis] use of the phone". The concept of "affordance" is tightly connected to media ideologies (Gershon, 2010) as it concerns the influence of the "materiality" of a technology and what that technology allows and does not allow. Here, Jennifer focuses on one function that the smartphone enables: to make phone calls. Thus, she sees the smartphone as a telephone first, which is why she considers the phone call the "real" use of a (smart)phone. Consequently, there is a contrast that is implied between the man's use of the phone (i.e. the phone call, which is the "real" use), and women's use of their phones in the news media's images where the focus is on other affordances (e.g. reading/writing texts, taking selfies). Because the women represented in the images are using their smartphones while showing exaggerated emotions and looking ridiculous, it

is implied through Jennifer's statement that women are doing something wrong or unexpected, whereas men are doing the right thing. Moreover, by claiming that the image portrays the "real" use of a phone, Jennifer implies that such a use is "better" than other uses (i.e. women's uses). This value judgment/assumption is connected to another assumption: the belief that there actually exists such a thing as a better/worse or real/unreal use of a (smart)phone. Because she assumes that the man's use of the phone is the "real" use – as opposed to an unreal use by a woman – she discursively empowers male digital media users, and disempowers female digital media users, because "in virtually all cultures whatever is defined as manly, is more highly valued than whatever is thought of as womanly" (Harding, 1986, p. 18). Jennifer also presents an understanding of the mobile phone/smartphone that reinforces traditional gender roles (Lemish & Cohen, 2005), where men use their phone for instrumental/public reasons, and women for emotional/personal reasons. The dichotomy between instrumental/public and emotional/personal is then transposed onto a similar dichotomous relationship between real/better and unreal/bad, which is what Jennifer implies. Sophie (28, university assistant) actually takes Jennifer's argument a step further and illustrates women's emotional (i.e. incorrect) use of technology with an example on line 9, when she says "whereas us we communicate to uh to put hearts everywhere and tell each other heartbreaks". Such usage is ridiculous (see line 14) and superfluous and contrasts with men's "real" and instrumental use. As such, the participants' media and gender ideologies reflect Tannen's (1990) understanding of men and women's communicative styles; women use "rapport-talk" (i.e. they seek community, intimacy, relationships) while men use "report-talk" (i.e. they seek action, negotiation, status). Although Tannen (1990) does not argue that one style is better than the other, the participants here imply that men's use of technology is better because they are not portrayed in ridiculous and exaggerated ways. Women, on the contrary, "tell each other hearthbreaks" (line 10) and "feel sorry for themselves" (line 12). Therefore, men are discursively empowered while women – including the participants who use the pronouns *on* and *nous* (i.e. "we") on lines 9, 12, and 14 – are discursively rendered more powerless.

Although they identify with the images of women using digital media and are directly affected by them, they condemn them with comments such as "it sucks" (line 17), "it annoys me" (line 20), and "it's 2018 dammit" (line 24). The female speakers thus reveal two competing identities; they are powerless as digital media users, yet powerful as women who condemn the status quo through their critical awareness.

The following Extract 5.17 also took place after I asked the participants if the "atypical" image of the man using his phone and smiling was similar to the women's images. When I showed the participants of FG 1 the "atypical" image, they described the man's use of technology in such a way that highlights hegemonic definition of masculinity.

Extract 5.17

From FG 1
Trigger question: What are these men doing? How are they represented?

1	Tania (24)	j'pense que ça représente pas la même chose c'est vrai que ça fait beaucoup plus
2		professionnel ca fait vraiment le gars qui va monter sa start up (0.2) il vend ses
3		poubelles écologiques et pis euh: voilà il est (0.2) en haut [ça fait un peu euh]
4	Melanie (24)	[mais tu restes] tu restes quand même dans l'cliché de la société qu'c'est l'homme qui
5		travaille [et c'est la femme qui s'amuse
6	Tania	et [c'est la femme qui s'amuse ouais
7	Melanie	ou alors qui est
8	Anna (25)	là dans ces photos [après moi]
9	Melanie	[après oui]
10	Anna	moi j'sortirais plus, on voit qu'le, c'est plutôt le
11	Tania	les publicitaires sont des hommes
12	Anna	( ) entre guillemets nous les femmes ont est plus émotives (2.0) on reste plus dans
13		l'émotivité parce que tu vois l'autre il est au téléphone, [mais tu vois juste qu'il est au
14		téléphone]
15	Jane (24)	[il pleure pas lui]
16	Anna	[mais y'a rien qui laisse transparaître tu vois
17	Jane	[ptêtre qu'il est en train de rompre avec l'autre t'sais
18	Anna	ptêtre ben ouais mais c'est con mais on sait pas d'quoi il parle

1	*Tania*	*I don't think it represents the same thing it's true that it looks much more*
2		*professional it really looks like the guy who's gonna create his startup (0.2) he sells his*
3		*eco-friendly trah cans and that's it he is (0.2) above it [looks like uh]*
4	*Melanie*	*[but you stay] you still stay within society's cliché that it's the man who works*
5		*[and it's the woman who has fun*
6	*Tania*	*and [it's the woman who has fun yeah*
7	*Melanie*	*or who is*
8	*Anna*	*here in these pictures [then I]*
9	*Melanie*	*[then yeah]*

10	*Anna*	*I'd rather say we see that it's rather the*
11	*Tania*	*advertisers are men*
12	*Anna*	*( ) us women we're more emotional (2.0) we are more concerned with*
13		*emotions because you see the other he's on the phone, [but you can only see that he's on*
14		*the phone]*
15	*Jane*	*[he's not crying]*
16	*Anna*	*[but there's nothing that shows through*
17	*Jane*	*[maybe he's breaking up with the other one you know*
18	*Anna*	*maybe yeah but it sucks but you don't know what he's talking about*

Here, the participants emphasize the dichotomy between men's use of technology as active and work-related, and women's use as passive and play-related. Tania's (24, beautician) first impression of the image is that "it's much more professional it's really like the guy who's gonna create his startup (.) he sells his eco-friendly trash cans and that's it" (lines 1-3). Tania's interpretation regarding the young man creating a startup and selling eco-friendly trash cans mirrors the discrimination currently happening in Silicon Valley and startup companies, for instance, where a majority of wealthy young male entrepreneurs are hired because of their race and gender (Marwick, 2018). In the same vein, Janice (30, graphic designer) from FG 4 expresses the same thought about men and women's role with regards technology:

Extract 5.18

Janice (30)	les patrons de euh, de grosses boîtes comme Google Apple tout ça c'est c'est c'est que des hommes
	the bosses of uh, of big companies like Google Apple all of that it's it's it's only men

In these examples, the participants clearly highlight the differences between men's use of technology (active, useful) and women's use of technology (passive and useless). Moreover, in Extract 5.17 above, Melanie's (24, insurance agent) critical stance towards society (lines 4-5) as well as Tania's (24, beautician) claim that "advertisers are men" (line 11) demonstrate their awareness of gender stereotypes and of who they think perpetuates them. Therefore, one notices in

Extract 5.17 how the female speakers negotiate different identities in their discourse. As female digital media users, they are again positioned as powerless, but as individuals aware of gender stereotypes and of the masculine hegemony that dictates the whole process of photo taking and editing, they become more powerful as they challenge gender ideologies. However, although some of the participants show awareness of patriarchal hegemony and gender stereotypes, others still reproduce the same gender ideologies, especially regarding the essential characteristic of women being more emotional, such as Anna's (25, physical therapist) claim on line 12: "us women we're more emotional", whereas in the image of the man she claims that "there is nothing that shows through" (line 16). Likewise, in FG 4, Ines (30, social worker) says "women are more expressive" (*les femmes sont plus expressives)* after seeing the images depicting women. The idea that women are naturally more expressive and emotional conveys an essentialist view that enacts "an understanding of gender differences as innate and rooted in biological and psychological underpinnings" (Marwick, 2014, p.63). This demonstrates that both the news media (through the images) and Anna and Ines themselves have been socialized to follow the "appropriate" gender codes that are taught from an early age. For example, boys are taught that they should not "cry like a girl". Such behavior is considered unacceptable since it would go against perceived gender-appropriate behavior. As I argued in the previous chapter, the news media shows women and girls that it is appropriate for them to use digital media while being exaggeratedly expressive and emotional, because these are supposedly inherent female characteristics, which is something that the female participants of the focus groups also take up, especially in FG 4 where the participants' first reaction after seeing the images shows the naturalization of gender ideologies:

Extract 5.19

From FG 4
Trigger question: What are these women doing? How are they represented?

1	Moderator	elles sont bien représentées ces femmes? Qu'est-ce que
2	Janice (30)	euh oui moi j'pense que c'est assez représentatif dans l'sens ou dans
3		n'importe quelle euh situation de vie euh (2.0) dans n'importe quelle
4		situation de vie t'as sou- t'as de toute manière le natel à proximité qu'ce

5		t'es contente t'appelles, t'es contente t'as une bonne nouvelle t'appelles
6		quelqu'un? T'es triste t'appelles quelqu'un?
1	*Moderator*	*are these women well represented? What is*
2	*Janice (30)*	*uh yes I think it's rather well representative in the sense of in*
3		*any uh life situation uh (2.0) in any*
4		*life situation you of- you have your phone next to you anyway*
5		*you're happy you call, you're happy you have a good news you call*
6		*someone? You're sad you call someone?*

Unlike the participants of the other focus groups who showed surprise and frustration right away, Janice does not think about gender and the way women are represented first. Because it is not surprising to see women with exaggerated expressions and emotions, she rather focuses on why people (not women in particular) use their phone. Therefore, her first reaction shows that she has internalized gender ideologies about women's digital practices. The media shows its audience what women and girls' digital media practices are/should be like, and here Janice takes up the media's "preferred meaning" by not questioning it.

In sum, the female speakers simultaneously position themselves as powerless and powerful within competing discourses. Although at times they challenge and resist gender ideologies through their awareness of the role of patriarchal hegemony in the reproduction of gender stereotypes, they also reproduce certain taken-for-granted gender ideologies and take up a powerless position as digital media users.

Discussion: (Dis)empowered "wired women"

In this chapter, I explored the discursive strategies that young "wired women" use to respond to the news media's gendered representations of "themselves". More precisely, I exposed if and how they take up and/or challenge the news media's ideologies about gender and digital media. I also argued why a feminist post-structuralist perspective is particularly useful for the purpose of my analysis as I examined how women position themselves vis-à-vis certain discourses as

simultaneously powerful and powerless. As Baxter (2003, p.10) contends, "[a] *feminist* post-structuralist perspective on discourse suggests that females always adopt multiple subject positions, and that it is far too reductive to constitute women in general, or indeed any individual woman, simply as *victims* of male oppression". In this chapter, I demonstrated that the young female participants discursively position themselves as powerful (as *women*) when they challenge the news media's representations and show awareness of patriarchal hegemony and gender stereotypes, and that they simultaneously position themselves as powerless (as *digital media users*) through their language and discourse, when they empower men as digital media users, and when they identify with the women depicted in the images. They thus show competing identities. Although the same ideas circulate among age groups, each group is rather heterogeneous as women show various identities. Therefore, bottom-up social meanings (from the focus groups) and top-down cultural discourses (from the news media) are not alike and the relationship between both is rather complex. Like Hall's (1997) "circuit of culture", the relationship between both highlights a social constructionist view of meaning produced and created in exchanges, where meaning is constantly reworked and shaped through different relationships.

The mass media has the power to frame what is thought to be of public concern, as media scholars have discussed. Hall's (1997) concept of "preferred meaning" and McCombs & Shaw's (1972) notion of "agenda setting" both encapsulate the role of the media in shaping public opinion. Hall (1997) explores the ways in which meanings are exchanged in a "circuit of culture" while examining the relationship between a text's production and reception. According to this approach, meaning is constantly reworked and shaped through different relationships, in a dialogic way. The context of the production and reception of a text are vital to its interpretation; yet, the role of the media in the construction of gendered meanings is essential. According to a social constructionist perspective, the media produces texts in certain contexts, and the audience decodes those texts drawing on their personal knowledge and culture. As a result, the "social processes involved in encoding the meanings of media texts are not the same as those involved in

decoding them" (Talbot, 2007, p.7). When the media uses language (sounds, gestures, images) to represent ideas or concepts, it creates meaning. However, a text does not have meaning in and of itself; meaning is "the product of negotiation between readers and texts" (Bell and Garrett, 1998, p. 2). Hence, the meaning of a text is not universal but depends on different factors that influence interpretation. Also, one needs to be aware of a text's polysemic quality, the fact that a text carries more than one meaning. As Hall suggests (1997, p.228), a text does not have one true meaning, but several "potential" ones. Therefore, media producers do not have all the power in creating the meaning of a text; when analyzing media representations, one needs to be aware of the complexity of the meaning-making of a text. Audiences resort to their own systems of representation to decode such texts. They make associations between people, objects, ideas etc. using a mental map and a specific language that enable them to make sense of the world (i.e. to represent the world) (Hall, 1997, p.17). Thus, representation is at the heart of the "circuit of culture"; we interpret messages by creating links between things in our head (e.g. between 'woman' and 'home'), and then we use language (images, words, etc.) to represent the concepts in our thoughts. Although readers/viewers of media texts give meaning to things using their systems of representation, "interpretation is not infinitely open" (Carter, 2012, p. 374). Media messages are shaped according to dominant and hegemonic ideologies in society, which direct the audience to a "preferred meaning" (Hall, 1997, p.228). In this way, the media exercises power in privileging one meaning over other possible ones, and the audience decodes this "alongside the ideological lines cued up in the text (and often also found in their own lives)" (Thornham et al., 2009, p.10). In this chapter, I have shown that the participants of the focus groups (i.e. the news media's audience) take up the media's "preferred meaning" on several occasions, showing that they have internalized certain ideologies such as hegemonic definitions of masculinity and have reproduced social power and inequality. However, they simultaneously show how, as media consumers, they can challenge and reject certain ideas that the media try to depict as common knowledge, ideas that often bear the imprint of public anxieties and "moral panic" discourses. Through the data I analyzed in this

chapter, I demonstrated how the participants challenge the news media's discourse by disassociating themselves from the images and showing awareness of patriarchal hegemony. Their actual use of digital media (e.g. for work) further contradicts cultural discourses that are problematically reductionist.

While the media is a powerful tool that many see as a *mirror* of reality, it is important to note that the media does *not* always accurately reflect reality and people's behavior. In this chapter, I gave a voice to young female users of digital media and showed that there is more to their relationship with digital media than what the news media conveys. Thus, these women "speaking back" represents a methodological contribution to the field of digital discourse studies where other new media scholars (e.g. Thurlow, 2007; Vickery, 2017) have noted how rarely young people are given a voice in public discourses. And because "women, through monopolies of words, talk, and media are denied identities as full speaking subjects and denied full and equal participation in family, community, and political life" (Rakow & Wackwitz, 2004, p.95), it is crucial to let them speak for themselves and listen to what they have to say in order to see the full picture, not simply the media's depiction of "reality".

Chapter 6

Making sense of digital media: The everyday circulation or moral panic and media ideologies

Setting the scene: From moral panic to media ideologies

> "Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned, the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true." (Foucault, 1980, p.131)

According to Foucault, knowledge and truth are linked to power; truth is discursively constructed and is "made" true in alignment with the rules of the specific socio-historical context in which it is presented. When discussing Foucault's concepts of power, Hall (1997, p.50) argues that power relationships are not necessarily unidirectional; rather "we are all, to some degree, caught up in [their] circulation – oppressors and oppressed". It is this *circulation* of certain meanings and "regimes of truth" that I would like to explore in this chapter, and how "what counts as true" circulates across groups and across domains. The news media, as a powerful organization, not only can decide "what counts as true," through the selection and amplification of what they consider important and newsworthy, they can also *shape* public opinion. In turn, their audience can either accept the news media's "truth", or reject it. While news media discourse shapes people's understanding of a variety of social concerns of which digital media use and practices are a part,

people do not always passively accept what they see and hear. As the "circuit of culture" (cf. Hall, 1997) demonstrates, media texts influence their audiences, but, in turn, audiences re-influence the media. As such, meanings are constantly exchanged through different entities and (re)negotiated. The audience plays an important role in the interpretation of media messages and in the construction or challenging of ideologies. The media can attempt to influence viewers and readers, but it cannot determine how the readers/viewers will decode a text. Furthermore, even though a text may have a significant impact on one reader, it may not have the same impact on another; the audience is heterogeneous and a variety of personal and social characteristics have the potential to influence the way one decodes media texts. Indeed, readers and viewers select the meaning that is most relevant to their beliefs and social allegiances (Abel, 2012, p.404). Although they are given a preferred hegemonic meaning, readers have the potential to negotiate, modify and reject dominant views according to their own experiences, which demonstrates that a text has multiple meaning potentials, something I explore in this chapter. The circulation of discourses shows that meanings are never fixed and can change over time as a result of the socio-cultural context in which a text is produced. However, the power of the media in trying to fix certain (hegemonic) meanings is important. The fact that people's beliefs are shaped by the media is important because people's ideological systems in turn influence their practices, such as the way they use and talk about digital media. Thurlow (2018) proposes a framework for exploring the interplay between micro-level communicative practices and macro-level social processes, a perspective prominent in the third wave of digital communication research, which is more critical and focuses on ideologies alongside other socio-cultural concerns (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015). As such, the latest research in digital discourse studies (e.g. Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015; Thurlow, 2018) is more socially oriented and allows scholars to shed light on issues related to the "social meanings" of digital communication and to better understand ideologies related to digital communication. Examples of such research include studies on discourses of risk in the media, specifically those concerning young people's digital media practices. Such scholarly work

(e.g. Jones & Schieffelin, 2009; Spilioti, 2015; Thurlow, 2006, 2017; Vickery, 2017) particularly highlights the discourse of "moral panic", which the press employs unilaterally to frame young people's digital media practices as dangerous and destructive. Indeed, when it comes to discussing young people's digital skills, the press tends to take a technologically deterministic position that portrays young people as incompetent and vulnerable in the face of the threat that new technologies pose. As a result, in today's mediasphere, it has become commonplace to read alarmist headlines such as "Have smartphones destroyed a generation?" (Twenge, 2017) and see images depicting young people's digital media practices in negative and reductionist ways (see Thurlow et al., 2019). The concept of "moral panic" was first introduced in Stanley Cohen's *Folk devils and moral panics* in 1972. In his classic work, Cohen focuses on the power of mass media in the construction of specific meanings and of moral panics through the labeling of "deviant" people. A key aspect of Cohen's definition of moral panic was its view of the audience as passive believers of whatever the media says. However, scholars such as McRobbie & Thornton (1995), Crichter (2008), and Buckingham & Jensen (2012) have explored the limitations of (early) moral panic theories. For instance, they critique its monolithic perspective and problematic focus on hegemony, society, and the role of the state and élites in the understanding of moral panic. Importantly, critiques of early moral panic theories suggest taking "a more *nuanced* [emphasis added] analysis of the politics of moral panics" (Buckingham & Jensen, 2012, p.423) by considering the complex, diverse, and contested nature of moral panics with regards to the role of the media and of the audience. In order to investigate the 'polylithic' aspect of moral panics and the many voices that emerge from a moral panic analysis, scholars have suggested various theoretical solutions. Buckingham & Jensen (2012) propose taking into account "social constructivism", a perspective that focuses less on the exaggeratedly negative and alarmist portrayals of social issues, and more on their "framing" by "[taking] into account the different ways in which problems are defined in different social and cultural settings". Another useful theoretical concept proposed by Buckingham & Jensen (2012) is that of "new cultural history",

which considers the importance of socio-cultural and historical factors in the understanding of popular debates. Although there have been many criticisms of moral panic theory, Critcher (2008, p.1138) notes that "Moral panic is better understood as an ideal type: a means of beginning an analysis, not the entire analysis in itself. And for that no better tool has yet been devised". Nevertheless, Critcher suggests adding another dimension to moral panic theory by considering the importance of "discourse" and "risk" in the analysis of moral panics. It is thus Critcher's (2008, p. 1140) understanding of moral panics "as extreme forms of risk discourses integral to the process of moral regulation" that I take in this chapter and this thesis. As Critcher (2008) and Buckingham & Jensen (2012) suggest, by taking into consideration "discourse", one also explores debates about 'wider' concerns regarding social order and social change.

In this chapter, I investigate one specific kind of moral panic discourse which circulates among the media and its audience. I examine discourses concerning media ideologies, and more precisely, ideologies about *digital* media. Below are two quotes (one from a prominent new media scholar, and the other from a focus group participant) that help to show the connection between lay and scholarly ideologies, and how "media ideologies" (Gershon, 2010c) are constructed.

> "A topic some eBook advocates dismiss as nostalgia is the physical side of reading: holding books in your hands, navigating with your fingers through pages, browsing through shelves of volumes and stumbling upon one you had forgotten about. Are we back to longing for buggies and typewriters? Or by going exclusively digital, would we lose some physical anchors that have been essential to the reading process for almost two millennia?" (Baron, 2015, xiv)

> "Au moins c'était un truc en papier" (Jennifer, 28, HR assistant, FG2)
> *At least it was something made of paper*

As Thurlow (2006) has already remarked, scholarly commentary about digital language and communication is rather heterogeneous. Indeed, Thurlow's account of scholarly discussions regarding the effects of digital communication on people's language and relationships reveals diverse ideologies ranging from the very negative to the very positive. Thus, Thurlow reminds readers that scholars' work bears the imprint of their ideologies. The same, of course, could be said about laypeople's comments on digital media. Both of the above quotes (one from a scholar and

one from a layperson) make mention of a media ideology which is shaped by nostalgia for a past medium. Indeed, Naomi Baron (2015) and Jennifer make use of the concept of *nostalgia* in order to understand and describe people's perceptions of different media. Specifically, it is "the longing for what is assumed to be lost in the continuing process of digitisation that accounts for contemporary media culture's widespread romanticising and fetishising of analogue media" (Schrey, 2014, p. 28). Niemeyer's (2014) collection of studies about media and nostalgia offers an excellent review of a contemporary trend exemplified by both Naomi Baron's (2015) and Jennifer's comments: the fact that "media do not only produce nostalgic narratives, but that they can be, in themselves, the creative projection spaces for nostalgia, as well as acting as the symptoms or triggers of nostalgia" (Niemeyer, 2014, p.11). Indeed, digital media can trigger nostalgia for past media which are no longer in use. In both quotes, digital media triggers nostalgia for the material structure of print books. Thus, these quotes illustrate how the *material structure* of digital media can affect people's beliefs about new technology and digital practices. As Gershon (2010c) notes, media ideologies "focus on how people understand both the communicative possibilities and the material limitations of a specific channel, and how they conceive of channels in general" (p. 283), which is a crucial aspect of this chapter. Two aspects of media ideologies that are especially important for my analysis in this chapter are *materiality* and *remediation*. According to Gershon (2010c), materiality is a key aspect of media ideologies and one of the main features that sets language ideologies apart from media ideologies. Materiality is concerned with the focus on the material aspect of a specific medium of communication, which shapes people's beliefs about and uses of that medium. Remediation is another key property in the understanding of media ideologies, and was first established by Bolter & Grusin (1999) who saw it as a continual relationship between older and newer media. People's ideologies about older media shape their ideologies about newer media; therefore, remediation affects people's beliefs about and uses of a particular medium. In this chapter, I also demonstrate through specific examples how both materiality and remediation shape people's media ideologies.

In keeping with the above theoretical background, this chapter addresses the following two research questions:

1) How does news media discourse shape people's understanding of and beliefs about digital media?
2) How do moral panics and media ideologies circulate in everyday conversation?

Ultimately, the data which I collected from my focus group participants sheds light on the ways in which people negotiate meaning concerning digital media use and practices. By focusing on three themes, I show that the participants do not always agree on the principles that guide digital media use. More precisely, by arguing what constitutes (im)proper use of digital media, actual users show how they "make sense" of different types of mediated communication.

Research design

In order to examine the complex intersection between top-down cultural discourses and bottom-up social meanings and practices, I use my focus group data (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed overview of the focus group data collection process). As a reminder, each focus group was composed of 4 to 5 participants, and lasted for about an hour. As I specified in Chapter 1, the questions that I asked them as "triggers" concerned the representations of women and men using digital media in news media imagery (cf. Chapter 4) *and* other more general media ideologies as they discussed issues related to digital addiction and children's digital media use (cf. Chapter 3). For the purpose of this chapter, I only discuss their answers to questions 1 to 3, which specifically concern media ideologies (see the complete questionnaire in Appendix C). Also, I do not explore their answers from a "gender" perspective; the goal of this chapter is rather to focus on media ideologies.

My analysis largely follows the tradition of critical discourse analysis (e.g. Fairclough, 2003;

van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2004) in order to examine participants' ideologies about digital media use and practices. As such, my chapter is organized around three themes that circulate across participants and across groups, and that show the news media's shaping of people's beliefs about digital media. The first theme concerns the participants' acceptance of the news media's moral panic discourses. The second theme concerns their negotiation of the meaning of digital media in relation to older media such as books or face-to-face interaction. The third theme consists of how they negotiate privacy and surveillance concerns. Each theme corresponds to three *concerns* that the participants expressed regarding digital media use and practices, some of which participants disagree on, and others where they show general agreement. Even though each concern is not necessarily addressed in all four of my focus groups, I selected these three concerns because they illustrate important discursive issues among different participants and across groups, and as such they reveal the participants' diverse media ideologies. In each thematic section I support my argument with various extracts taken from the four focus groups.

Analysis: Moral panics in everyday talk

Theme 1: Taking up the news media's "moral panic" discourse

In this first section, I would like to explore the ways in which the participants "speak back" to news media discourse about children's digital media use and practices since some of the questions asked in my focus groups specifically concerned children's use of digital media and the news media's visual and linguistic representations of this demographic (for a more detailed explanation of why I focused on "children" in this thesis, see Chapter 3). Therefore, this chapter serves as a means to investigate the relationship between cultural discourses and social meanings, and a way of seeing whether people take up the news media's ideologies and/or challenge them. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the participants of the focus groups mostly agree with the press and its discourse of "moral panic". In order to demonstrate my argument, I take a close look at various extracts, all of

which took place after I showed the participants two news media images of young children using a digital device alone and asked them what they thought of these images (cf. question 3a in Appendix C). Here are the two images they saw:

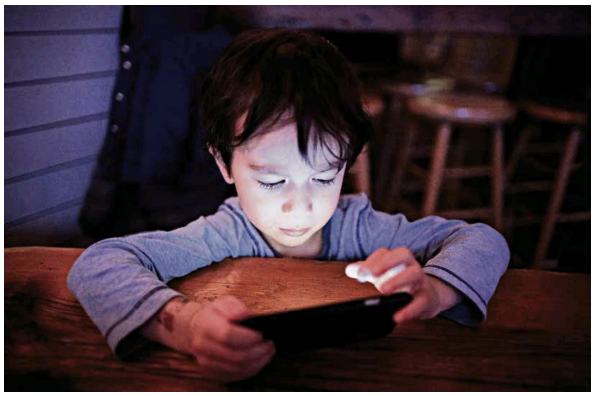

Figure 6.1: News media image of a young boy using a smartphone. (Article source: Le Temps, Switzerland, 2 February 2018. Original image caption: *Les spécialistes voient l'apparition de symptômes de dépendance et de perte de contrôle chez des enfants de plus en plus jeunes* (Specialists have noticed the appearance of symptoms of addiction and loss of control in children earlier than ever before) (Image caption: Getty Image)

Figure 6.2: News media image of a young girl using a tablet. (Article source: The Telegraph, UK, 10 June 2017). Original image caption: *Ofcom reports that 80 per cent of 11-15 year olds have smartphones and spend more than half the time they are online chatting and sharing pictures on Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat* (Image source: Per Breiehagen)

In three focus groups, the participants refer to other texts and voices to support their argument. Intertextuality (cf. Fairclough, 2003) is particularly relevant here because it shows how the

participants incorporate other voices to legitimate their arguments, which I claim has important ideological consequences. The following two extracts exemplify the ways in which different voices intermingle and how they are attributed.

Extract 6.1

FG 4 (30 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1	Janice (30)	ben y'a eu un article très intéressant dans Mise au Point dimanche passé faut que tu
2		l'regardes du coup
3	Pauline (30)	ouais
4	Aline (30)	ouais
5	Ines (30)	ouais j'ai vu aussi
6	Janice	sur les effets euh (0.3) justement dramatiques sur les enfants ou ils montraient un ptit
7		garçon qui avait des traits qui avait des traits presque autistiques (0.2) les parents ils les
8		a- ils l'avaient mis depuis bébé devant des écrans (0.5) et (0.2) au niveau
9		développement du langage comme ça ça avait eu des effets dramatiques sur le sur le
10		ptit garcon (0.5) donc c'est assez impressionnant, moi ben justement en ayant David
11		je j'fais quand meme super attention

1	*Janice (30)*	*well there was a very interesting article in Mise au Point last Sunday you need to watch*
2		*it then*
3	*Pauline (30)*	*yeah*
4	*Aline (30)*	*yeah*
5	*Ines (30)*	*I saw it too*
6	*Janice*	*on the dramatic effects uh on children where they showed a little boy*
7		*who showed features that were almost autistic, parents had put*
8		*him in front of screens since he was a baby, and as for language development*
9		*like that it had dramatic effects on the little boy, so it's quite*
10		*striking, because with David*
11		*I try to be really careful then*

Extract 6.2

FG 2 (28 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1	Tiffany (28)	mais mais par rapport à ça j'avais vu une émission que ben effectivement c'est
2		hyper stimulant (.) mais ça peut engendrer des retards de croissance parce que ben

1	*Tiffany (28)*	*related to that I saw a TV program that it's actually over*
2		*stimulating but it can cause developmental delays because*

In Extract 6.2, Tiffany (28, HR assistant) refers to "a TV program" that she saw, and in Extract

6.1, Janice (30, graphic designer) refers to the Mise au Point TV show that she saw (perhaps the same show that Tiffany mentions). We see here evidence that the participants are taking up news stories. In both cases, the voices are attributed – they are more precise in Janice's case. Here, the women do not claim authorship of deleterious comments such as "dramatic effects" (line 6) and "autistic characteristics" (line 7) in Extract 6.1, and "developmental delay" (line 2) in Extract 6.2. Indeed, the way the participants choose to frame and contextualize the issue is particularly relevant. As Fairclough (2003, p.53) argues, "when the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to 'frame' it". In Extract 6.1, Janice decides to focus on a negative framing of young children's digital media use. She references "dramatic effects" twice (lines 6 and 9), and one of the effects she chooses to mention is autistic-like behavior (line 7). As I stated in Chapter 3 about news media discourse on children's digital media use, the popular framing of autism in the media and in society in general is transposed here onto the consequences of digital overexposure, which in turn reinforces the sentiment of fear and panic. As a result, Janice, who is the mother of David, a 3 and half year-old boy (who was 2 at the time of the focus group interview), takes extra measures and tries to "be really careful" (line 11) with her own child. The media's message has had a real effect on her and on how she views digital media and the relationship between children and digital media; it has scared her. Unfortunately, such a framing of children's digital media use and practices only serves to feed people's fear and panic regarding children's digital media consumption and prevents them from devising a reasonable approach to the risks and opportunities inherent in digital media. Moreover, the media's focus on health issues (and Janice's focus as a consequence) is problematic because the press often references extreme cases and individual stories which can mislead parents without offering sound advice to parents (e.g. Bickham et al, 2016, p.196). Similarly, in Extract 6.2, Tiffany also chooses to frame her argument around health concerns, specifically "developmental delays" (line 2). As with comparing the consequences of digital overexposure to autism, Tiffany implies that children who are overexposed to screens might not develop normally. Both Janice and Tiffany refer to other voices

of authority. As a result, they are implying that they are not making up the information; they saw it on TV and it must be true. There is a tendency to believe what the media says and take such information as facts, even if the media's portrayal of digital media use and practices is often constructed in an overly dramatic way, which is often seen as more important than reporting truth and facts (e.g. Thurlow, 2014). As Kohring & Matthes (2007, p.238) suggest, "news media can be regarded by most people as the crucial source of information about social and political life". In the examples above we see the circulation of messages through different "media". Indeed, when the participants first saw the newspaper article that I showed them (the "trigger"), they thought about/referenced another "medium" (TV). The role of the media in constructing/shaping people's media ideologies is important, even if people do challenge certain meanings. As I mentioned earlier, Hall (1997) introduced a useful model in this regard, where he explores the ways in which meanings are exchanged in a "circuit of culture" while examining the relationship between a text's production and reception. According to his approach, meaning is constantly reworked and shaped through different relationships, in a dialogic way. Audiences resort to their own systems of representation to decode texts. They make associations between people, objects, and ideas using a mental map and a specific language which enable them to make sense of the world (i.e. to represent the world) (Hall, 1997, p.17). Thus, representation is at the heart of the "circuit of culture"; we interpret messages by creating links between things in our mind (e.g. between "digital media" and "children"), and then we use language (images, words, etc.) to represent the concepts in our thoughts. Another example of the circulation of messages through the mediasphere and audience (cultural discourses and social meanings) is the following extract from FG 3, where we see the reference to "autism" once again, but where the "other voice" is not attributed:

Extract 6.3

FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1	Adelina (23)	mais c'est terrible parce que à cause de ça en fait y'a toute une nouveauté, l'autisme
2		numérique (0.3) en fait qui qui qui tout d'un coup emerge, tout d'un coup on s'rend
3		compte en deuxième enfantine t'as des enfants qui savent pas en fait c'que (0.2) ils ils
4		sont moins en fait euh en contact avec les choses simples, et ils savent pas dire
5		qu'un ptit pain c'est un ptit pain, en deuxième enfantine, parce que tout ce qu'ils
6		voient c'est des images et des dessins

1	*Adelina (23)*	*but it's terrible, because of that there a new phenomenon, digital autism*
2		*that is emerging all of a sudden, all of a sudden you*
3		*realize that in kindergarden there are kids who don't know well they they*
4		*are less well uh in contact with simple things, and they don't know how to say*
5		*that a roll is a roll, in kindergarden, because all that they*
6		*see are images and cartoons*

Adelina (23, teacher) assumes through her use of *y'a* (there is) (line 1) that "digital autism" is a phenomenon that exists. By not attributing her claim about autism to any other voice, Adelina "reduces difference" (Fairclough, 2003), which is the definition of assumptions since statements are taken-for-granted. In fact, Adelina's reference to autism probably came from the news media (newspapers or TV programs such as Mise au Point), which other participants referenced. This goes to show the effect that the news media can have on people's beliefs. In Adelina's statement, autism becomes the agent (the doer of the action) when she says that digital autism is a "new phenomenon" and that it is "emerging all of a sudden" (lines 1-2). Such a framing emphasizes the speed of the process; it is as if it were something we did not see coming but is now a real threat. By assuming that digital autism exists without attributing her claim to other sources, and by choosing specific words such as "new phenomenon" and "all of a sudden", Adelina's point has a stronger impact and creates a sentiment of fear and panic. The three extracts above are good illustrations of the circulation of meanings across different media and across people. In this case, the discourse of moral panic in regards to children's digital media use and practices, and technological determinism circulate across media and people. The focus on health consequences in the extracts above is all the more significant when one recalls what prompted their answers. My question was

not related to health issues (question 3b was related to health issues and came later in the interview). Rather, it was seeing the images of children alone with digital devices that triggered their dystopian discourse. As a final illustration of the ways in which discourses of moral panic circulate among the audience, I would like to briefly comment on the following extract from FG 4:

Extract 6.4

FG 4 (30 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1 2	Pauline (30)	c'est pas c'est pas un couteau c'est pas un fusil mais c'est tout autant dangereux pour eux 'fin c'est

1 *2*	*Pauline (30)*	*it's not a knife it's not a gun but it's just as dangerous for them well it's*

In this extract, Pauline (30, makeup artist) compares digital devices to weapons such as a "knife" and a "gun", both of which are deadly weapons. This is an example of technological determinism at its finest, where the technology itself (the material device), is seen as directly causing harm.

In this first section, I showed how moral panic discourses and media ideologies circulate among the news media and its audience and how meanings circulate in a "circuit of culture". In this case, news media discourses are taken up in people's talk about digital media. In the following section, I turn to another way that participants negotiate meanings and concerns about digital media.

Theme 2: Negotiating digital media in relation to older media

Across the focus groups, I noticed that the participants negotiated the meaning of digital sociality in ways that are both critical *and* supportive of digital media. In order to demonstrate media ideologies at work, I examine several extracts that illustrate the media ideology concepts of

"materiality" and "remediation" (cf. Gershon, 2010c) as the participants discuss smartphones in relation to books, and in relation to face-to-face interaction – both are "old" media. In essence, I shed light on the social meanings of digital media use and practices with special attention paid to the importance of the medium in communication, and on the participants' redefinition of what counts as "mediated" communication. First, I would like to examine the participants' discussion of the differences between books and smartphones, which is a topic that surfaced on various occasions. Here, I rely on Naomi Baron (2015) who surveyed young American's ideologies about digital and print books as they discussed why they preferred reading on screens or in physical books. Baron analyzed the interviewees' arguments, which were tightly connected to the affordances (i.e. the characteristics and properties) of each medium. Extract 6.5 below occurred after I showed the participants a newspaper headline and image concerning digital addiction (cf. question 2 in Appendix C).

Extract 6.5

FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about news articles which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

1	Melanie (24)	Tu r'gardes tu prends [l'train y'a plus personne] qui s'parle
2	Jane (24)	[oui mais après]
3	Jane	Attendez ouais on va essayer de pas parler tous en même temps
4		C'est moi qui vous ai coupé là donc euh (0.2) Parce que, genre les gens? on critique
5		un peu nous on est genre, oui dans l -matin moi aussi j'suis comme ça mais les
6		gens qui lisent c'est pareil, ils sont dans leurs bouquins alors pourquoi on critique
7		le fait d'être sur son iPhone alors qu'être sur son bouquin c'est pareil, tu [t'plonges
8		dans une histoire]

1	*Melanie (24)*	*you see you take [the train there's nobody] talking to each other*
2	*Jane (24)*	*[yeah but then]*
3	*Jane*	*wait yeah let's try not to talk at the same time*
4		*I cut you off so uh, because, like people, we criticize a little*
5		*we're like yeah in the morning I'm also like that*
6		*but people who read it's the same thing, they are in their books so why are we criticizing*
7		*the fact of being on your iPhone whereas reading a book is similar, you*
8		*[immerse yourself in a story]*

Here, Melanie (24, insurance agent) (line 1) introduces the topic of (a)sociality. In a technological deterministic way, she implies that people do not talk face-to-face anymore because they are always on their phones, something she sees on the train. Her claim is not surprising and media scholars have extensively investigated such media ideologies in their analyses of discourses of "moral panic" with regards to digital media (e.g. Tagliamonte & Denis 2008; Spilioti, 2015; Squires, 2010; Thurlow, 2006, 2014). In contrast, Jane (24, marketing assistant) (lines 3-8) takes a different stance and disagrees with her friend, especially with regards to the assumption that digital media use results in antisocial behavior. She points out that reading on the train could be viewed just as asocial as being on a smartphone. In both cases, she states that "you immerse yourself in a story" (lines 7-8). Jane's media ideologies contrast with Melanie's and the news media's ideologies which focus on asociality and technological determinism with the belief that the technology itself (i.e. the phone) is responsible for destroying social relationships. Here, Jane does not take into account the affordances (properties) of each object (i.e. smartphone and book). She simply considers books and smartphones to be on the same level since they are both objects that one uses individually. However, both objects have different affordances and are therefore not totally equal. For instance, as Baron (2015, p.19) explains, digital books and print books allow for different experiences as a result of their materiality (e.g. touch and smell with the organic nature of print books) and because of the ways in which our brains behave while we are using each object (e.g. we tend to be more distracted when using a digital device). Although a digital device and a physical book have different affordances, Jane argues that being (or reading) on a phone does not make people more asocial than when they are reading a physical book. In both cases, people do not talk to the people around them. In fact, what they do on their phone can even make them *more* social since they can communicate and interact with other people online. For instance, when it comes to reading online, Baron (2015, p.xiv) gives the example of the social experiences of online reading groups, which is not possible with physical books. This is one way that my participants appeared to

negotiate digital sociality; in this case, the argument made is that digital devices do not necessarily make users more asocial than other individual activities such as reading books.

In the next extract (which also occurred after the participants saw the headline and image regarding digital addiction), the participants' concern is not necessarily about antisocial behavior, but about the values associated with reading a physical book.

Extract 6.6

FG 2 (28 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about news articles which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

1	Sophie (28)	mais on regarde les gens autour de nous, donc ils ont déjà leur écouteurs
2		mais personne ne lit un livre, tout l'monde est sur sont natel [vraiment]
3	Tiffany (28)	[hmmhem]
4	Jennifer (28)	moi j'lis un livre le matin ((laughs))
5	Sophie	[ouais maintenant ouais c'est vrai]
6	Sophie	franchement c'est très [rare]
7	Jennifer	[j'suis la seule]
8	Sophie	c'est très rare
9	Jennifer	oui non c'est vrai
10	Sophie	et d'ailleurs j'me rappelle que une fois (0.2) quand j'avais un livre qui me
11		plaisait (0.2) ça m'arrive pas souvent, euh, et que j'lisais on était deux filles
12		face l'une à l'autre et on lisait nos livres, et le gars à côté ah ben c'est drôle ça
13		on voit jamais des gens qui lisent dans l'train
14	Tiffany	ouais
15	Sophie	tu vois à quel point c'est [inhabituel]
16	Jennifer	[c'est vrai]
17	Jennifer	c'est vraiment de triste, après j'pense que avant ça veut pas dire que
18		avant ben tout l'monde r'gardait les journaux
19	Sophie	non
20	Jennifer	mais au moins c'était un truc papier

1	*Sophie (28)*	*but we look around us, they already have their headphones on but*
2		*nobody's reading a book, everybody's on their phone, [really]*
3	*Tiffany (28)*	*[hmmm]*
4	*Jennifer (28)*	*I read a book in the morning [((laughs))]*
5	*Sophie*	*[yeah now yeah it's true]*
6	*Sophie*	*frankly it's very [rare]*
7	*Jennifer*	*[I'm the only one]*
8	*Sophie*	*it's very rare*
9	*Jennifer*	*yeah it's true*
10	*Sophie*	*and I remember once when there was a book that I liked*
11		*it doesn't happen very often uh and I was reading there were two of us sitting across from*
12		*each other we were reading our books and the guy next to us oh it's funny you never see*
13		*people reading on the train*
14	*Tiffany*	*yeah*

15	*Sophie*	*you see how much [unusual it is]*
16	*Jennifer*	*[it's true]*
17	*Jennifer*	*it's really sad but then I think that before it doesn't mean that before well that everyone was*
18		*reading newspapers*
19	*Sophie*	*no*
20	*Jennifer*	*but at least it was something made of paper*

Here, I would like to take a moment to examine Sophie's (28, university assistant) first statement (lines 1-2) in comparison with Jane's (24, marketing assistant) argument from the previous extract. Sophie assumes that wearing headphones is antisocial bahavior (line 1) and that the fact that "everybody is on their phone" is also antisocial. As a reminder, Jane's point in the previous extract was that reading a book *can* also be an antisocial activity. However, here Sophie (28, university assistant) and her friend Jennifer (28, HR assistant) go on to praise books. On line 4, Jennifer is proud to tell everyone "I read a book in the morning" (note the use of the double pronoun *moi* (me) and *je* (I) in French to emphasize what she does in contrast to what others do). The fact that Jennifer reads books in the morning is all the more special when one takes into account the next couple of lines about the apparent rarity of such activity nowadays (lines 6-8). To emphasize the idea, Sophie recounts a personal anecdote that happened on the train once (lines 10-13). While she was reading a book on the train, a man sitting next to her said "Oh it's funny you never see people read on the train" (lines 12-13). Jennifer comments in a nostalgic way on the fact that reading books has become rare and says, "it's really sad" (line 17). Although Jennifer admits, "it doesn't mean that before everyone used to read newspapers" (line 18), Sandra (28, management consultant) claims, "at least it was something made of paper" (line 20). Therefore, the participants here seem to be nostalgic for a time when reading physical books was more commonplace. The participants appear to be longing for a time where the "physical anchors that have been essential to the reading process for almost two millennia" (Baron, 2015, p.xiv) were still in existence but which are slowly disappearing. In a similar vein, Schrey (2014, p.28), discusses "analogue nostalgia" or the "fetishising of analogue media", a contemporary trend found in both lay and scholarly ideologies. Ultimately, the participants in my focus group perpetuate "the myth of the

disappearing medium" (Ballatore & Natale, 2016) regarding the printed word, a narrative that highlights anxieties about the supposed death of the book, which they see as a vehicle of values, civilization, and culture. Therefore, the focus group participants implicitly assume that reading a physical book is "better" or "superior" to reading on a digital device, particularly because of the physical and material affordances of print books. The "natural" and "organic" nature of the print book is captured by the materiality of paper, which is something that can age and deteriorate (Ballatore & Natale, 2016; see also Schrey, 2014 regarding other analogue media). Here, it is the importance of the material aspect of books that forms the participants' media ideologies.

In the next extract regarding the relationship between books and digital media, Cindy (24, social worker) contrasts reading (*la lecture*) with technology (*les technologies*).

Extract 6.7

FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1	Cindy (24)	c'est intéressant ce que tu dis parce que c'est vrai j'pensais pas (.) dans les
2		technologies y'a un truc en plus que dans la lecture y'a pas (.) dans la lecture
3		tu dois investir un minimum
…		
4		tu dois investir l'activité pour comprendre autrement c'est pas intéressant si tu
5		comprends pas un livre tu pètes un plomb (.) tandis c'est devenu facile d'etre là sans
6		être là (.) devant un film devant euh (.) euh Instagram t'as pas besoin de fournir de
7		l'énergie ni

1	*Cindy (24)*	*it's interesting what you're saying because it's true I didn't think with*
2		*technology there's something that doesn't appear in reading, in reading you*
3		*have to invest a minimum*
…		
4		*you need to be involved in the activity to understand otherwise it's not interesting if*
5		*you don't understand a book you go off the rails whereas it's become easy to be there*
6		*without being there, in front of a movie in front of uh uh Instagram you don't need*
7		*to provide energy (i.e. make an effort)*

Noticeably, in this statement, Cindy assumes that reading is an activity one can only do with a physical book and does not think about the possibility of reading a book on a digital platform, which has become quite popular with the introduction of eReaders and tablets (Baron 2015; Ballatore & Natale, 2016) as well as smartphones. As in the previous extract, the participants seem to see something sacred about the physicality of books; one can touch, smell, and feel them. They are "praised as sacred repository of wisdom" (Ballatore & Natale, 2016, p.2384). Moreover, physical books have been around for centuries and are highly valued. Indeed, in the Middle Ages, books were seen as works of art – they were embellished, illustrated, and decorated – and as symbols of knowledge and literacy; moreover, the physical work that was needed for the realization of books was so intense that it required the participation of various people (Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters, 2001). The old book-making tradition and the values attached to print books help to explain the participants' naturalized assumption that books are necessarily physical objects. Books are still symbols of knowledge and education today, especially because their affordances are limited compared to what digital devices allow; for instance, one can read, communicate, and play on a digital device. Although one can read online, when Cindy thinks about new technologies, she associates them with watching movies and going on Instagram (line 7). In this particular extract, I wish to focus on Cindy's description of the mental and physical requirements of both activities. Reading a book requires a certain investment from the reader and concentration in order to comprehend the book (lines 3-5), whereas using Instagram apparently does not demand an effort on the part of the user (lines 6-7). As Cindy says, "you can be there without being there" (lines 5-6) which is to say that you can be physically present but mentally aloof while using social media. According to Baron (2015, p.xiii), digital media allows multitasking and can lead to more distraction. In contrast, reading a book requires one to be both physically and mentally present and distraction is less possible; it is often seen as a true "sensorial experience" (Ballatore & Natale, 2016; MacFadyen, 2011). Therefore, the dichotomy Cindy makes between books and digital media is transposed onto another dichotomy between being active (with books)

and passive (with digital media). Through such a dichotomy, Cindy presumes than reading a book is better than being on one's phone. Cindy's media ideologies are thus tightly connected to the affordances of each medium and her perception/misconception of them.

With the two following extracts, I want to highlight the participants' media ideologies by focusing on *remediation*, a process emphasized by the fact that people's ideologies regarding a particular medium can affect and transform their understanding of other media (Bolter and Grusin, 1999; Gershon, 2010c).

Extract 6.8

FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about news articles which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

Melanie (24)	tu r'gardes tu prends [l'train y'a plus personne] qui s'parle
Melanie (24)	*you see you take [the train there's nobody] talking to each other*

Extract 6.9

FG 2 (28 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about news articles which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

1	Sophie (28)	ouais, ah et pis ah genre euh (0.2) j'pense maintenant y'a ptêtre une ou deux semaines
2		j'étais dans le euh train (0.3) j'avais mon ordi portable, en face y'avait mon cousin
3		qui était sur son smartphone, et y'a un gars qui (0.1) j'sais pas d'une cinquantaine
4		d'années qui est passé à côté de nous il nous a dit ah ben c'est beau d'voir la jeunesse
5		qui communique
6	Sandra (28)	((laughs))
7	Sophie	ouais ça m'a beaucoup énervé sur le coup
8	Jennifer (28)	avec Paul
9	Sophie	ouais j'étais avec Paul, ça m'a hyper énervée parce que j'étais là ah rabat-joie euh et
10		en plus j'étais en train de faire euh (0.1) j'crois que répondais à mes mails vraiment
11		et du coup 'fin bref, voilà mais euh (0.2) j'trouve aussi que c'est un ptit peu inquiétant
12		quand on voit que les gens ne parlent 'fin ptêtre parlent un ptit peu moins,
13		mais après j'pense que 'fin nous en tous cas (0.2) de notre generation, on sait
14		poser la limite, là on était les trois dans l'train, peut être qu'on a [r'gardé]

1	*Sophie (28)*	*yeah ah and then like uh I just thought of it now maybe one or two weeks ago I was*
2		*on the train I had my laptop and in front of me there was my cousin who was on*
3		*his smartphone and there was a guy who was I don't know in his fifties who walked past*
4		*us and told us ah it's nice to see young people*
5		*communicate*
6	*Sandra (28)*	*laughs*
7	*Sophie*	*yeah it really pissed me off at that moment*
8	*Jennifer (28)*	*with Paul?*
9	*Sophie*	*yeah I was with Paul, it really pissed me off because I was like ah killjoy uh and I was*
10		*uh I think I was responding to my emails really and so*
11		*well but uh I also think it's a little worrying when you see that*
12		*people don't talk, well maybe they talk a little less, but then I think that*
13		*well us in any case, of our generation, we know where to set the limit, there were three*
14		*of us on the train maybe we only watched*

In extracts 6.8 and 6.9, we see how the participants' ideologies regarding face-to-face communication and about digitally mediated communication compete and are intertwined. In extract 6.8, Melanie (24, insurance agent) complains about the fact that nobody talks to each other anymore on the train (line 1). In saying this, she implies that people *should* be talking to each other instead of being on their phones, and that face-to-face conversation is better than digitally mediated conversation, especially on public transportations such as trains, when people are in the (physical) presence of other people. In such situations, the people who are physically present are more important than people who might be online or than any other online activity one can be engrossed in. Similarly, in extract 6.9, Sophie's (28 university assistant) personal anecdote (lines 1-5) also involves the competition between two potential "media" found on public transportations (i.e. trains): face-to-face and digitally mediated communication. In this case, the fact that an older fifty year-old man sarcastically says "it's nice to see young people communicate" (lines 4-5) after seeing Sophie and her cousin busy on their own digital devices annoys her (line 7: it really pissed me off), especially since she had a "good excuse". Indeed, Sophie says, "I think I was responding to e-mails, really" (line 10). By saying this and emphasizing her point with "really", she implies that what she was doing online was a good enough excuse to not be talking to her cousin who was sitting opposite her on the train. According to Sophie, not *any* kind of online activity is appropriate when one is in the presence of someone else; however, replying to work-related e-mails is

appropriate. Thus, Sophie also agrees with the fact that the "correct" and "better" behavior in a similar situation would be to talk to the person who is physically present. In both extracts, by treating face-to-face communication as a "better" channel in specific situations, the participants assume that face-to-face communication is indeed a medium of communication (see Gershon, 2010 for a similar example). Just like Gershon's (2010) young interviewees, my participants' evaluate co-presence as mediated communication; thus, their "new media ideologies are affecting ideologies of older media, and even transforming what had not been widely defined as a medium into one" (Gershon, 2010, p. 402). The fact that people's media ideologies affect and are affected by ideologies of older media is the very definition of *remediation*. Furthermore, we notice another media ideology concept in the extracts above: *materiality*. As Thurlow (2017, p.13) explains, *materiality* is "concerned with the degree to which the material (i.e. physical and technical) affordances of a particular medium are attended to vis-à-vis its social uses". More precisely, here I would like to focus on one type of social use: *where* it is appropriate to use a specific medium of communication. As Gershon (2010, p.287) puts it, "technological designs presuppose social narratives, including locations of appropriate use" (see Akrich 1997 as well). There is a tendency across the focus groups to consider the use of digital media in a public space such as public transportation and restaurants as inappropriate in the presence of other people one knows. Just as Sophie's media ideologies shape her understanding of where it is appropriate to use digital media, Melanie (24, insurance agent) and Anna (25, physical therapist) in FG 1 argue in favor of face-to-face communication in restaurants and are critical of the fact that some people who are physically together may spend time on a digital device instead of talking to each other:

Extract 6.10

FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about news articles which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

1	Melanie (24)	t'es d'accord que souvent quand on a été au restaurant souvent s'est dit on met pas
2		les natels sur la table
3	Jane (24)	ça j'déteste ça j'fais pas

1	*Melanie (24)*	*don't you agree when we go to the restaurant we often tell each other*
2		*not to put our phones on the table*
3	*Jane (24)*	*I hate that I don't do that*

Extract 6.11

FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1	Anna (25)	une fois au restaurant au Portugal j'étais avec une amie, et pis euh y'avait une
2		famille (0.2) donc deux enfants les parents et pis euh (0.3) ils ont pas discuté un seul
3		mot quoi, un seul truc parce que quoi? les deux enfants ils avaient les tablettes la
4		femme elle était sur son téléphone elle discutait même pas avec son mari non plus,
5		donc déjà déjà là, ben justement après c'est ça (0.2) c'est pas l'fait qu'ils aient les
6		tablettes qui est choquant c'est l'usage [et QUAND] tu l'utilises

1	*Anna (25)*	*once at a restaurant in Portugal I was with a friend and then uh there was a family*
2		*two kieds the parents and uh they didn't exchange one word, one thing because what*
3		*both kids had a tablet the woman was on her*
4		*phone she was not even talking to her husband so there you go well*
5		*there it's not the fact that they had a tablet that was shocking but*
6		*the use [and WHEN] you use it*

In both extracts, the participants assume that in a restaurant, the priority should be on the people physically present around them, and also assume that face-to-face conversation should be prioritized. For instance, in Extract 6.10, Jane's (24, marketing assistant) remark "I hate that I don't do it" (line 3), exemplifies her strong involvement in disassociating with the practice of using one's phone at the table. To emphasize her point further, Jane specifies that she does not do it (line 3). In Extract 6.11, Anna (25, physical therapist) is also clearly annoyed by the fact that people would rather look at their phone than talk to each other at a restaurant. Sharing a meal with other people – a practice called "commensality" – has been a significant social experience for centuries, and is still important in today's society, although some scholars (e.g. Mennell, Murcott & van Otterloo, 1992) have identified a possible decrease in the social aspect of meals as people become more individualistic. Nevertheless, the "moral panic" discourse related to a decline in family meals exists and highlights the importance of commensality, even if such a discourse may be exaggerated and unfounded (Murcott, 2012). Yet, the participants in the extracts above all emphasize the

importance of commensality to them; as a result, they see smartphones as "disrupters" of the social experience of eating together. According to Anna (lines 5-6) in extract 7.11, the problem is not the digital device in and of itself, but rather the use of it. Here, it is seen as a disturbance of a sacred event: meal time, which is supposed to be a social experience. Although social media platforms such as Instagram have allowed another form of sharing food experiences with people remotely located, the *social* experience that the participants indirectly allude to is one of co-presence and not an online one. Therefore, in Extract 6.11, line 6 is especially relevant because it underscores the importance of usage (i.e. when, where) in shaping people's media ideologies. Although Jane and Anna argue in favor of face-to-face communication in specific situations such as the dinner table, they are both "heavy" digital media users and not ashamed of it. They do not argue in favor of face-to-face interactions because they are against digital media and/or do not use them, but rather because of their media ideologies and what they consider (in)appropriate digital media use.

In sum, this second section shed light on the participants' media ideologies and what they consider (in)appropriate digital media practice(s). It is considered appropriate to be on one's phone in public spaces when one is alone (e.g. using a digital device on the train, as a pastime or as entertainment). However, in the co-presence of other people one knows, it is seen as inappropriate. Thus, the participants' media ideologies reveal the common assumption that there is a real "offline" world and a virtual "online" world; as such "it is against the 'standards' of authenticity presumed in face-to-face interaction that virtual worlds, identities and communities are compared and found to be falling short or exceeding expectations" (Spilioti, 2015, p.136). In this case, the participants' media ideologies express an understanding of the real offline world as better and praise traditional media since they show high esteem for print books and (unmediated) face-to-face interaction. In this sense, the participants tend to align with the dystopian discourse found in the news media rather than challenging it. Although I did not refer to news media discourse in this second section, moral panic discourses about, for instance, the end of the book, have been "a common trope in journalist commentaries that reflected on the impact of new technologies on the

act of reading" (Ballatore & Natale, 2016, p. 2380). Through this analysis of people's media ideologies, we thus see another example of the circulation of anxieties among the media and (lay and scholarly) audiences.

Theme 3: Negotiating surveillance and privacy

Finally, the participants discuss their concerns about privacy and surveillance. Such a concern was not prompted by any of my questions – none of my questions were about privacy or surveillance – but surfaced in the participants' conversations. In their discourse, the participants demonstrated their understanding of what is (in)appropriate digital practice in relation to the "affordances" of digital media (cf. Hutchby, 2001; Gershon, 2010b), especially when it comes to the constant tracking and surveillance of users that digital media allow. My analysis shows that the participants' media ideologies and practices do not always align when it comes to privacy issues, and that it is often difficult to manage "context collapse" (cf. Marwick & boyd, 2011) in relation to privacy concerns. Moreover, we find two types of surveillance discourse: the traditional "top-down" surveillance, where big corporations and governments spy on "regular" people, and a more recent type called "lateral surveillance" (Andrejevic, 2005) or "social surveillance" (Marwick, 2012), which describes what social media users do when they monitor and track other users' digital content and practices. The following extracts exemplify both kinds of discourses.

Extract 6.12

FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: We're done with questions. Would you like to add anything else about new communication technologies and people's practices?

1	Charlotte (19)	sur l'iPhone 10 t'as pas de touches, et en fait t'as euh l'empreinte faciale (0.2) du coup
2		tu regardes ton iPhone devant toi, et ça fait clic
3	Julie (22)	Florie elle a ça et ben désolée ça me fait trop flipper, ça veut dire que déjà ils ont ton
4		empreinte, ils ont ton visage, tu peux aller partout hein tu seras de toutes
5		façons fi- fi- 'fin ils vont te trouver quelque part

…

6	Julie	mais à vie
7	Charlotte	ouais ouais
8	Julie	ça reste à vie, ça me fait trop peur
9	Charlotte	mais c'est comme, tout est lié là, Cecilia on on va à Rome à
10		la fin du mois elle a réservé sur booking le vol, et ça s'est
11		rajouté tout seul dans son calendrier et son calendrier lui dit he c'est bientôt votre
12		voyage à Rome (0.2) mais elle elle était là comment il sait
13	Everyone	((laugh))
14	Julie	mais c'est comme quand tu parles d'un truc la journée ça m'est
15		arrivé tellement de fois (0.3) ou tu regardes un truc pis une
16		seconde tu parles et pis tu sais même pas si le téléphone
17		t'entend, j'arrivais le soir pis j'regardais les trucs sur
18		Instagram j'vois les même plublicités [que de ce que j'ai voulu
19		ptêtre regarder pour acheter]
20	Charlotte	[que c'que t'as parlé ouais]
21	Samantha (18)	ah ouais moi j'ai eu pareil ouais
22	Julie	mais ça fait peur
23	Samantha	ouais ouais ouais
24	Julie	c'est comme en fait si on te suit

1	*Charlotte (19)*	*on the iPhone 10 there's no button and actually there is facial recognition*
2		*so you look at the phone and it clicks*
3	*Julie (22)*	*Florie uses that and I'm sorry but it's so scary, it means that they have your prints*
4		*they have your face you can go anywhere you'll be well*
5		*they're gonna find you somewhere*

…

6	*Julie*	*but for life*
7	*Charlotte*	*yeah yeah*
8	*Julie*	*it stays for life its scares me a lot*
9	*Charlotte*	*but it's like everything is interconnected, with Carole we're going to Rome at the end of*
10		*the month and she booked her flight on Booking*
11		*it added itself on her calendar on its own and her calendar told her*
12		*your trip to Rome is coming up and she was like how does it know*
13	*Everyone*	*((laugh))*
14	*Julie*	*but it's like when you talk about something during the day*
15		*it happened to me so many times or you look at something*
16		*and you talk for one second and you don't even know if the phone*
17		*can hear you, I was coming home at night and looking at stuff on*
18		*Instagram I saw the same ads [what I wanted to*
19		*look for to buy*
20	*Charlotte*	*what you talked about yeah*
21	*Samantha (18)*	*yeah the same thing happened to me*
22	*Julie*	*but it's scary*
23	*Samantha*	*yeah yeah yeah*
24	*Julie*	*it's as if you were being followed*

In Extract 6.12, the participants demonstrate their awareness of the fact that powerful people and entities "above" are watching regular people. This kind of surveillance implies a hierarchy and

power differences (boyd, 2011). On lines 3-5, one notices that Julie (22, commercial employee) does not quite know who these people are, which is why she refers to them as "they". Is it the government? Or big corporations? This goes to show the lack of transparency when it comes to surveillance practices and the secrecy surrounding them, which helps to explain Julie's skepticism. Moreover, one understands that these "people" are powerful due to the *ubiquitous* nature of what they do: they are going to find you wherever you go (line 5), and also through the *permanent* nature of their action: they can keep your traces "for life" (line 6). There is also the *omniscient* nature and *humanization* of technology: "you don't even know if the phone can hear you" (line 18); "her calendar tells her that her trip is coming up" (line 11); "how does it know?" (line 12); and "it's as if you're being followed" (line 24). All of these quotes exemplify the Panoptic metaphor (first referenced by Bentham, 1995 and Foucault, 1975) which can be found in various research and work regarding surveillance (see Manokha, 2018, for an overview of research). The central point of the metaphor concerns the social awareness of being watched. As Manokha (2018, p.228) explains, "individuals become conscious that they are under surveillance, that data about their online (and also offline) activities are being collected and stored by various entities, that the digital traces they leave may be gathered and analyzed in ways and for purposes that they do not know of and at points in time that are not known to them either", which is exactly what we see in Extract 6.12. As a consequence of such awareness and because of the "chilling effect", people may start to change their behavior and practices. The "chilling effect" is related to "the idea that laws, regulations, or state surveillance can deter people from exercising their freedoms or engaging in legal activities on the internet" (Penney, 2017, p.2). The "chilling effect" can also happen with lateral or social surveillance. For example, if people know that their posts will be read by a lot of people, they might censor specific information. In FG 3, Adelina (23, teacher) talks about her use of WhatsApp and the fact that she has different WhatsApp groups: family, friends, students, and students' parents. This is a typical example of "context collapse" (Marwick and boyd, 2011), where different social contexts (e.g. work, family, friends – public and private) collapse into one online

platform.

Extract 6.13

FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?

1	Adelina (23)	voilà ouais ouais (.) du coup ils viennent t'écrire à n'importe quel moment même la
2		photo de profil j'me disais mince mais qu'est ce que je vais mettre et tout [un moment
3		j'la changeais
4	Charlotte (19)	[ah t'oses pas
5	Adelina	ouais j'sais pas j'me disais ptêtre que selon ce que j'mets euh ça peut être un ptit peu
6		mal perçu ou bien, je sais pas, j'ai des parents qui ont dit à leurs enfants ah elle est
7		plutôt jolie ta maitresse pis les enfants ils viennent me dire (0.2) ouais sans
8		déconner c'est vraiment en fait on rentre dans une espèce de proximité dans une
9		intimité j'trouve ça va trop loin, pis j'trouve que nous en tous cas, dans
10		l'enseignement on sait plus comment gérer

1	*Adelina (23)*	*there you go yeah yeah, okay so they text you whenever even*
2		*the profile picture I thought darn what am I going to choose [there was a time*
3		*I would change it]*
4	*Charlotte (19)*	*[ah you don't dare]*
5	*Adelina*	*yeah I don't know I was thinking depending on what I choose it might not be*
6		*well perceived or, I don't know, there are parents who told their kids ah she's*
7		*beautiful your teacher and then kids come and tell me that, yeah*
8		*for real it's really, well we start getting close in an*
9		*intimacy I think it's going too far, and I think we in any case, as a*
10		*teacher, we don't know how to handle that*

In this example, Adelina explains how she has to think about her audience (composed of people from different social contexts) when choosing her profile picture (line 2) and admits that she would change her picture at times (line 3), which is a direct consequence of the "chilling effect". In other words, she self-restrains or self-censors because she wants "to avoid argument or discussion" (Manokha, 2018, p.230). Adelina also admits that she does not always know how to handle the fact that her audience is composed of people from various contexts (line 10). As Marwick (2012) notes, context collapse leads to a blurring of social roles; as such, everyone seems to be on the same level (i.e. her as a teacher, her students, and the students' parents). However, the fact that Adelina finds it difficult to manage the different groups of people shows that they are *not* on the same level, and that there are indeed different power relationships between them. In other words, "[m]oments of

rupture when social roles collide demonstrate that power flows not only top-down from authoritarian entities, but between individuals" (Marwick, 2012, p.387). Although Adelina admits that context collapse can be hard to manage, she later claims that she does not see it as a problem for her personal and professional life. In response, Veronica (19, student) reminds Adelina that her pupils keep texting her (which she views as inappropriate), to which Adelina replies:

Extract 6.14

FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: We're done with questions. Would you like to add anything else about new communication technologies and people's practices?

1	Adelina (23)	tout à fait, mais ça veut dire quoi que je supprime WhatsApp que je supprime
2		Snapchat que je supprime Instagram pour éviter que les élèves ils m'écrivent ou alors
3		je

1	*Adelina (23)*	*exactly, but what does that mean, that I should delete WhatsApp, delete*
2		*Snapchat, delete Instagram in order to avoid that pupils text me or*
3		*I*

Thus, according to Adelina, self-censoring (a consequence of the chilling effect) is not a solution. Although Adelina has to think about the ways in which she presents herself online – because of her heterogeneous audience – she refuses to go so far as to delete her apps and social media platforms just because of the consequences of social surveillance. In fact, Adelina likes all of the surveillance affordances that her digital media allow. In the following extract 6.15, she gives the example of *Life 360,* a tracking app that helps her localize friends and family at all times. Extract 6.15 comes right after the discussion of top-down surveillance and the negative aspect of technology. It reveals the tension between participants' media ideologies since some are concerned about privacy and surveillance issues, and others are not.

Extract 6.15

FG 3 (18-23 year-old women)
Trigger question: We're done with questions. Would you like to add anything else about new communication technologies and people's practices?

1	Adelina (23)	mais après moi personnellement ça me rassure par exemple vous savez mon copain
2		il habite à Fribourg, pis nous on a une application en fait ça nous permet de savoir
3		ou on est
4	Julie (22)	ah mon dieu arrête
5	Charlotte (19)	moi ça m'fait peur
6	Julie	mais c'est la pire vous êtes malade
7	Charlotte	ah non mais c'est find your friends
8	Adelina	c'est Life 360 (0.3) pis moi en fait, lui lui il vient tous les
9		samedis et ça me permet de savoir ou il est pour me préparer pour sortir ou pas quoi
10	Charlotte	mais tu peux lui écrire un message aussi
11	Adelina	oui mais y'a pas que ça mais c'est pas grave
12	Veronica	((laughs))
13	Julie	mais tu t'fais tout le temps contrôler c'est un truc de malade ça veut dire tu sors il sait
14		ou t'es
15	Adelina	ouais
16	Julie	ah non mais moi j'trouve que c'est trop là

1	*Adelina (23)*	*but then personally I find it reassuring for example you know my boyfriend*
2		*lives in Fribourg, and we have an app it allows us to know*
3		*where we are*
4	*Julie (22)*	*oh my God stop*
5	*Charlotte (19)*	*I find it scary*
6	*Julie*	*but she's out of her mind you're crazy*
7	*Charlotte*	*oh no but it's Find your Friends*
8	*Adelina*	*it's Life 360 and so I, he comes over*
9		*every Saturday and it allows me to know where he is so I can get ready to go out or not*
10	*Charlotte*	*but you can text him too*
11	*Adelina*	*but there's more to it but that's okay*
12	*Veronica*	*((laughs))*
13	*Julie*	*but you're always monitored it's crazy it means you*
14		*go out he knows where you are*
15	*Adelina*	*yeah*
16	*Julie*	*ah no I think it's too much*

In this case, there is no "chilling effect" for Adelina whereas Julie is totally opposed to such tracking apps. Both friends argue in favor or against one of the affordances of digital media: locatability (cf. Schrock, 2015) and explain their divergent perspectives on how digital media (i.e. social media apps such as *Life 360*) alters social relationships. Adelina finds such apps "reassuring" (line 1); she feels safe and reassured that she can have such a close bond with the people she loves. Similary, Ma & Chan (2014, p.52) refer to Reis & Patrick (1996) and claim that they "suggest that

people feel safe among others, which is why they actively seek support from social networks". Here, it is important to ask what motivates Adelina to share such personal information and why her motivations are different from Julie's. Ma & Chan (2014, p.51) suggest a link between the extent to which users share information online and "theory of belonging and the intrinsic motivation of altruism"; they demonstrate how users' sharing behavior is influenced by interpersonal relationships. In Adelina's case, her relationship with her boyfriend is crucial in determining what she is going to share online. As such, since her relationship with her boyfriend online through 'Life 360' is based on her relationship with him offline, her "perceived online attachment motivation and perceived online relationship commitment are found to be key determinants of online knowledge sharing" (Ma & Chan, 2014, p.55). Moreover, sharing private information online through the "locatability" affordance of mobile technology enables new ways of forming relationships and new practices (Schrock, 2015); for Adelina, it allows her to know when she can get ready to go out (line 9), for instance, and as such to extend online the relationship she has with her boyfriend offline. However, other participants do not approve of such apps. Charlotte (19, student) finds such apps "scary" (line 5), and Julie emphasizes the exaggeration and insanity of those apps with statements such as: "oh my God stop" (line 4); "but she's out of her mind, you're crazy" (line 6); "it's unbelievable" (line 13); and "but I think it's going too far" (line 16). Therefore, Charlotte and especially Julie have different opinions regarding the "location" affordance; in this case, they are not thinking about sociability. For them, it goes too far. Another example in FG 1 illustrates the same perspective on online tracking features:

Extract 6.16

FG 1 (24-25 year-old women)
Trigger question: What do you think about news articles such as the one below which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

1	Melanie (24)	mais t'vois après ça nous coupe aussi notre liberté
2	Tania (24)	de quoi comment
3	Melanie	par'ce que tout le temps surveillé, t'vois moi j'veux dire les gens i savent exactement
4		ou je suis tout le temps

5	Jane (24)	mais ça c'est par'ce que t'as autorisé moi j'ai pas autorisé

1	*Melanie (24)*	*but you see then it interferes with our freedom*
2	*Tania (24)*	*how so*
3	*Melanie*	*because you're always monitored, you see I mean people know exactly*
4		*where I am all the time*
5	*Jane (24)*	*but it's because you authorized it, I didn't authorize it*

Here, Melanie (24, insurance agent) discusses the effects of certain social media features on her "freedom" (line 1) while using social media. In response, Jane (24, marketing assistant) says that she has not authorized the "tracking" feature (line 5), which is an example of a "chilling effect"; she decided to self-restrain by not turning on specific localization features that her smartphone allows.

In sum, my focus group participants demonstrate a variety of practices and media ideologies in response to privacy and surveillance concerns, with no single, uniform approach to the issue. The participants' media ideologies regarding what is (in)appropriate use of digital media are based on the affordances of digital media, particularly the "locatability" affordance, and emphasize users' concerns, fears, and anxieties about the loss of control and freedom.

Discussion: Making sense of digital media

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide an understanding of a group of young users' media ideologies, and to show what current social issues surface among them. Their media ideologies might not be representative of the larger population; however, what they define as (in)appropriate digital media use and practices matters. Although concerns, anxieties and "moral panic" discourses regarding digital media are constantly changing due to the fast rate at which technologies evolve and change, it is still important to investigate which cultural meanings are circulating at a given time and place, and among a certain demographics. This chapter sheds light

on three major concerns that young Swiss-French digital media users between 18 and 30 emphasize, and provides an analysis of whether those concerns and anxieties are "shared assumptions". As Gershon (2010a, p.199) stated nearly ten years ago, "people now expect to have standard practices established" concerning digital media, but this is not always the case.

The first "concern" that the participants discussed was prompted by questions that were specifically about children's digital media use, since I was interested in the relationship between the news media's cultural discourses about children's practices (cf. Chapter 3) and people's ideologies. I found that the young participants accept much of what the news media transmits without questioning it. In this case, my focus group participants share many of the same expectations when it comes to young children's digital media use; their discourse is centered on moral panic and fear. Therefore, one sees that meanings circulate across media and people in much the same way as Hall (1997) describes with his "circuit of culture". Next, I showed that there is general agreement on the social practices surrounding digital media when compared with books and face-to-face encounters. The ways in which the participants understand the appropriate social use of digital media cannot be properly understood without taking into account their ideologies about older media (cf. remediation), which is where we find shared assumptions between the participants. They believe that face-to-face interaction should be privileged when people are in the co-presence of other people they know, and that physical books are of higher value than digital devices. As such, digital media are seen as "intruders" or "disrupters" of activities people have engaged in for a long time: talking to people face-to-face and reading books. Such ideologies are sometimes associated with "older" people and often found in the news media; however, the participants I interviewed are all young "millennials" who frequently use digital media and who even claim to be addicted to their devices at times. Yet, they seem to be affected by news media discourse and still consider "traditional" media to be important. Finally, I showed that when it comes to privacy and surveillance, participants do not always agree on the ways in which they can resolve social issues using digital media. As a matter of fact, people do not always have the same

"idioms of practice", which is a term that Gershon (2010a, p.6) uses to explain how "people figure out together how to use different media and often agree on the appropriate social uses of technology by asking advice and sharing stories with each other". The fact that people do not have the same "idioms of practice" explains why they do not always share the same meanings when it comes to digital media use and practices. The case of the "locatability" affordance of digital media shows how different idioms of practice compete, for example between Adelina (23, teacher) and Julie (22, commercial employee), who clearly have different media ideologies and idioms of practice. In sum, this example shows that there is not always a uniform etiquette regarding the use of digital media. Yet, many participants expressed fear and anxiety when confronted with surveillance and privacy issues.

In each of the three sections, the participants make dramatic and sometimes dystopian comments regarding digital media, even though they are all "heavy" users. As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there is a mutual shaping between people's communicative practices and larger systems of beliefs (cf. Thurlow, 2018). The ways in which people talk about digital media and the ways in which they use it shape their larger system of beliefs. In turn, these ideologies structure their digital discourse and practices by imbuing them with specific values. This mutual relationship is never-ending; both people's digital media practices and their ideological system shape each other in a circular process that repeats itself. As a result, their beliefs and attitudes become naturalized. The circular relationship between micro-level practices and macro-level ideologies can explain why the audience can both be influenced by *and* influence the media. Since discourses are produced in relations of power, equity, and social justice (Gee, 2011, p.30), exploring media discourse is particularly important. The media is a powerful organization that is responsible for the (re)production of these ideologies; in the act of choosing one form of language (verbal, visual, etc.) over another, they "have the potential to re-scale social, cultural, and symbolic capital, and thereby 're-shuffle' authority and expertise on particular issues" (Milani and Johnson, 2010, p. 6). Through the way they frame particular issues, they have the power to shape and

change dominant ideologies, which in turn influence people' social practices. Dominant social groups such as the media use ideology to establish their power; they use certain discourses "in the service of the struggle to maintain or acquire power" (Woolard, 1998, p.6). They do so by trying to "fix" certain ideologies and make them seem natural and common sense through their metalinguistic representations. They do not mirror reality but attempt to circulate a naturalized distorted version of reality in which certain voices are privileged over others. As a result, the medias' choices, values, and definitions serve to create social boundaries and inequalities in relations of power in society at large. As I demonstrated in this chapter, there are direct consequences to circulating distorted versions of reality since the audience can take these idologies up and spread them. I have also shown how people genuinely struggle to make sense of digital media, especially under the influence of what they hear and see in the news. In particular, we see how news media discourses are often (but not always) taken up and adopted when regular people talk about digital media. The circulation of the particular "regimes of truth" that I have analyzed in this chapter ultimately reminds us that technological change is both perceived in terms of progress as well as in terms of regression and anxiety. It is this "nuance" in people's media ideologies that I wish to explore further in the next and final concluding chapter of this thesis, as I wrap up my exploration of the significance of the relationship between the media and its audience.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: The affective regimes of digital discourse

Throughout this thesis, I have investigated the complex ways in which digital media discourse circulates across languages and nations, across linguistic and visual modes, across domains (e.g. the news media, stock photography, audiences), and across social groups (e.g. females users of digital media). More specifically, I have shown that the social meanings and cultural discourses of digital communication are varied and complex. I would now like to take a look at how each of the chapters of this thesis help to "make sense" of the various discourses that circulate between the news media and its audience, and understand how these chapters relate to one another. Ultimately, I argue that digital discourse (in the press and in everyday conversation) is imbued with an important affective undercurrent.

Summary of the thesis

Chapter 2 of this thesis concerned itself with language ideologies and related semiotic ideologies and served as a stepping-stone to the following chapters which focused more on media and gender ideologies. In Chapter 2, I examined the metadiscursive framing of digital discourse in international news stories about emojis. Specifically, I analyzed narratives about the perceived threat to language posed by digital visual communication. I showed how discourses concerned with language deterioration – discourses that frequently blame new technologies – are redirected to the deleterious impact of visuality, which is an example of a discourse of "language

endangerment" (cf. Duchêne & Heller, 2007). Ultimately, I demonstrated that the discourse of language endangerment is not only constitutive of language ideologies, but also of deep-seated "semiotic ideologies" (cf Keane, 2003) or beliefs about meaning-making. In other words, the discourse of language endangerment revealed how journalists value certain semiotic modes as being superior to others, (i.e. when they describe (written) language as superior to images and visual communication). My discourse analysis of international news reports not only showed how journalists "misrecognize" the nature of language, visual communication, and digital media, but also how they seek to scare their audience through diverse rhetorical tactics (i.e. the emoji as a new language; the rise and spread of emojis; and linguistic, cultural, and intellectual degradation), all of which serve to create a discourse of moral panic.

In the following chapter, I moved from language ideologies to media ideologies with a specific focus on news media discourse regarding children's digital media practices. Using the framework of multimodal critical discourse analysis, I analyzed the news media's ideologies concerning children's relationship with digital media and revealed journalists' and adults' expectations of children and their digital media practices. These expectations and interpretations are often framed solely around a discourse of risk and are loaded with "harm-driven expectations" (cf. Vickery, 2017), which is problematic, misleading, and narrowing since this view justifies practices centered on surveillance and restriction, in the name of children's safety. The news media discursively constructs an idea of childhood as "risk free" which, in turn, shapes an understanding of children as passive and vulnerable. I thus demonstrated how "childhood" is a concept that is socially and discursively produced (e.g. Holloway & Valentine, 2000; James & Prout, 1997; Stainton-Rogers & Stainton-Rogers, 1992). While there is a long precedent of moral panic discourses and mediatized "scare tactics" in the news, I argued that these cultural discourses are problematic since news media discourse not only has implications for children, but also for parents and caregivers who are frightened by the one-sided perspective that the news media offers. If parents are told that "screens are like crack to children", it is understandable that parents would

not want their child to spend time on digital media. In this way, the media suggests a form of digital abstinence for children. However, this is an unrealistic expectation in a digital world where more and more children possess some form of digital technology. Consequently, the press scares its readers without offering them a realistic alternative for dealing with their children's use of digital media. Furthermore, by focusing solely on the potential deleterious effects of digital media on children, the press does not take into account all of the valuable empirical work being done on children and their digital media use, much of which points to the positive opportunities offered by digital media (e.g. Livingstone et al., 2018).

In Chapter 4, the last chapter in which I focused on news media discourse (or the "cultural discourses" of digital communication), I introduced "gender" as a key analytic focus by examining the role of the media in constructing and fixing gendered visual ideologies related to digital communication. I showed how women and girls are limited by the news media's visual representations of them, and how the digital practices that are encouraged visually are often confining and disempowering. Although research illustrates what women are capable of doing with digital media – through digital feminist activism for instance (cf. Keller et al., 2018; Mendes et al., 2018) –images found in the news media offer a very narrow vision of what women can do with technology by emphasizing an essentialist position on gender differences that positions women's conversational, social and emotional skills, as well as their interest in beauty and appearance, as inherent and fixed. Although the news media does not employ the same "scare tactics" in relation to women that it uses with children and emojis, it relies on a different kind of "moral panic" when portraying women, one that presents women as vacuous, irresponsible, vulnerable and at risk (see Thurlow, 2017). The news media industry (in selecting the specific images that form my dataset) and the photo industry (in creating such images) construct gendered identities in relation to what they consider "normed" categories. Such constructions socialize men and women into certain kinds of behavior. For instance, the people represented as young, overly expressive and emotional when using digital media are mainly women because these kinds of

behaviors are associated with popular beliefs about womanhood (see Marwick, 2014). These images purport to tell us what being a woman using digital media is/looks like. However, they also go to show that even (overly) happy affective representations can be problematic. Even though the women depicted in the images are "happy", the seemingly "positive" representation of these women actually serves to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes of women as unserious and emotional. In these images, the flow of emotions is less triggered by *talk* about digital media, but is rather *seen* in the visual representations of digital spaces. As such, the media's construction of such spaces is out of touch with today's society as it takes an essentialist position on gender differences.

The next two substantive chapters of my thesis examined the social meanings (or embedded practices) of digital communication. In Chapter 5, I offered a methodological contribution to the field of digital discourse studies by letting young women speak for themselves. I explored the discursive strategies that "wired women" utilize to negotiate the news media's gendered representations of women and digital technologies, and how they (re)produce and/or challenge gender ideologies. Through my four focus groups, I examined the complex intersection of top-down cultural discourses and bottom-up social meanings and/or practices. Although the media (and its patriarchal ideology) subtly directs its audience towards a preferred meaning that aligns with its values and *reflects* dominant attitudes in society, it does not perfectly mirror society itself. As Lazar notes, discourse is a "socio-historically contingent 'meaning-potential'" (2000, p.376). Thus, gender discourse is also a social construction and has the potential to be challenged. Furthermore, as the "circuit of culture" (cf. Hall, 1997) demonstrates, media texts can influence their audiences, but audiences also play a role in the interpretation of media messages. An audience is not a passive entity which blindly accepts any message from the media; rather, the audience plays an active role in the construction or challenging of ideologies, which is what I found in my focus group discussions as regards the patriarchal gender ideologies promoted by the news media. Ultimately, I demonstrated that my focus group participants discursively position themselves as powerful by challenging the news media's representations of women and showing

awareness of patriarchal hegemony and gender stereotypes. They are able to negotiate and even reject the moral panic that the media prepetuates. However, they simultaneously position themselves as powerless by empowering men as being more competent digital media users and by identifying with the women depicted in the images (who are often portrayed as simple-minded). Following feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (Baxter, 2003), I showed that the female participants exemplified two competing identities. They showed surprise, annoyance, frustration, and dissatisfaction with the news media's images representing women as digital media users, images that they challenged and rejected because of their exaggeratedness. However, they did not show any surprise or shock when viewing the images representing men. I argued that they had evidently internalized and normalized gender ideologies that represent men as more professional and business-like. According to these gender ideologies, it is (working) men who "naturally" exemplify qualities such as seriousness and intelligence. Therefore, although women reproduce some of the news media's gendered ideologies when discussing digital media use, they also challenge "normalized performances of emotions" (Döveling et al., 2018, p.2) when it comes to the portrayal of women's digital media practices.

In my final substantive chapter, Chapter 6, I analyzed my focus group participants' media ideologies in regards to digital communication as they spoke back to news media discourse. As in the press, the participants displayed a dystopian perspective with regards to digital media, and much of their media ideologies were imbued with fear. However, their discourse was more "nuanced" than the news media's. I identified three major concerns that participants shared concerning digital media and digital communication. The first concern consisted of paricipants' fears regarding children's use of digital media and was prompted by questions that specifically addressed children's digital media use (as a response to news media discourse about children's digital media use). Here, I found that participants took up the same discourse of "moral panic" (see Buckingham & Jensen, 2012; Critcher, 2008) regarding children's digital practices that I discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Their second concern regarded the (in)appropriate use of digital media

and showed a certain nostalgia for old/traditional media, particularly for books and face-to-face communication, another discourse commonly found in the news media. Finally, the participants shared their concerns and worries regarding privacy and surveillance issues. I found that the participants did not always agree on the best way to resolve social issues concerning digital media, and that they did not always have the same "idioms of practice" Gershon (2010a, p.6). Although all three of their concerns mirrored some of the concerns frequently discussed in the press and all three centered on moral panic and fear, I ultimately showed that young people have a hard time making sense of digital media, especially as a result of the influence of news media discourses and the "regimes of truth" that they perpetuate. Their struggle is evident through their understanding of media change as both a step forward and a step backward. Indeed, in contrast to the news media, which often focuses on dystopian discourses at the expense of all else, the participants' discourse was much more nuanced.

Moral panics and/as affective regimes

In sum, all of my chapters revolve around the affective nature of digital media discourse, whether through the "affective" undercurrent of news media discourse or the audience's "affective" response to such discourse. I argue that a perspective focusing on affect and the power of emotional appeals can help us understand how certain language ideologies, media ideologies and gender ideologies circulate among journalists and their audience and how they become naturalized through this interaction (cf. Pribram & Harding, 2002). As Grossberg (1992, p.82-83) argues, "affect is the missing term in an adequate understanding of ideology"; "[i]t is the affective investment which enables ideological relations to be internalized and, consequently, naturalized". In other words, the media ideologies found in the press are not simply intellectual arguments appealing to the audience's reason; they are arguments which use logic to make a strong emotional appeal. Therefore, not only do ideas and beliefs become naturalized through media discourse, the

emotions that the press elicits while espousing these ideas and beliefs become naturalized as well.

The "affective turn" marked a turning point in the field of social sciences and humanities, when scholars started to take into greater consideration bodily experiences and emotions, and our capacity to affect and be affected (e.g. Ahmed, 2004; Massumi, 2002; Clough & Halley, 2007; Wetherell, 2012). As a result, "the turn to affect becomes a decisive shift away from the current conventions of critical theory, away from research based on discourse and disembodied talk and texts" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 3). As mentioned above, Grossberg (1992) discussed "affect" as the "missing term" (p.82) in the understanding of ideology, and critiqued the dominant focus on "representation" and cognition in cultural studies. Following Grossberg and other scholars of "affect", I take into account the importance of "affect" in the construction of ideologies. More specifically, I look at the mediated representations of digital media and how these have the power to "affect" their audiences. Some of the traditional discourses one finds in the press (and sometimes among users) are imbued with the feeling of fear; these discourses seek to scare their audiences into action. The media's "affective practices" (which are not all dystopian) are "continually dynamic with the potential to move in multiple and divergent directions" (Wetherell, 2012, p.13). I showed throughout this thesis how affective states and practices travel and circulate across different domains, how the press can influence its audience's affective states, and how the audience can challenge, resist and/or take up the press's emotionally-charged ideologies.

The role of the news media in the circulation and transformation of emotions and affective practices is better understood through the concept of "mediatization". Indeed, the term "is used in communication studies for the critical analysis of interrelations between socio-cultural and media-communicative change" (Androutsopoulos, 2014, p.10). Döveling et al. (2018) bring together research on *mediatization* and *affect* as an additional step in the understanding of online communities of practices. They coined the term "digital affect cultures" to explain how digital technologies "foster a globally mediatized emotional exchange" (Döveling et al, 2018, p.1). I am especially interested in their argument that digital affect cultures are "inherently normative and infused with

relations of power where, depending on the context, some emotional scenarios are normalized at the expense of others" (Döveling et al., 2018, p.2). Although their research focuses on investigating the circulation of emotions *in* digital spaces (i.e. social media), my thesis rather explored the flow and circulation of emotions outside of/around digital spaces. I argue that digital affect cultures may also emerge from and be triggered by *talk about digital spaces*, in metadiscursive practices. As such, hegemonic affective practices and emotions circulate through different spaces and become normalized. The news media's discourse with its distorted representations of digital media practices (e.g. emojis) and of different groups of users (e.g. children and women) not only circulates negative kinds of "affect" (e.g. fear and anxieties), but also other happier affective states (e.g. the overly excited women using their phone/eating a salad), which shows the *nuance* in the discourses that are circulating. Those different kinds of affect trigger similar or different emotional responses in their audiences. Emotions are "discursively constructed cultural practice[s]" and are "governed by implicit norms of what and how we should feel" (Döveling et al., 2018, p.2). When news media discourse visually and linguistically portrays digital media as dangerous and frightening, or celebrates young women's use of digital media, it essentially tells audiences that they *should* feel the same way about digital media. And, as I discovered in my focus groups, much of their audience does feel the same way.

Ultimately, I argue that there is an "affective regime" which circulates between the news media and its audience. An "affective regime" describes "the set of conditions that govern with varying degrees of hegemonic status the ways in which particular kinds of affect can be appropriately materialized' (Wee, 2016, p.109). Thus, as an "affective regime", the news media not only tells its audiences what to think about a particular issue, it also implicitly tells them how to *feel*. While Hall's (1997) "circuit of culture" takes into account the ways in which meanings are constantly exchanged and (re)negotiated through different entities, his framework does not consider the important "affective" dimension that also circulates. In my focus groups, I found that not only do certain ideas circulate between the news media and its audience, certain emotions do

as well (moral panic and nostalgia). In order to understand the effect that news media discourse has on regular people, I explored how these different "affects" develop, circulate, resonate, and change. I found that the "affective regime" surrounding digital media is not necessarily uniform, and that it mirrors to some extent what Kuntsman (2012, p.2) calls "reverberation" with regards to the circulation of emotions and affective states. "Reverberation" refers to "distortions and resonance, intensification and dissolution in the process of moving". While some affects such as fear are intensified in their movement and circulation (e.g. the news media's dystopian discourses about the risks and harm of digital media and the audience's similar response), others can be "muffled" (cf. Kuntsman, 2012, p,2), as I showed with the supposed "celebration" of young women's use of digital media in Chapter 4. Indeed, even positive affective representations can be problematic since they can "muffle" a wider "moral panic" discourse.

It is with this in mind that I turn to two final examples of mediatized discourse. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 show recent headlines and their accompanying images from the English-speaking press, which help to further demonstrate the prevalence of "affective regimes" surrounding digital media.

Social-Media Outrage Is Collapsing Our Worlds

The internet once made it easier to slip from one domain to another. Is there a way to preserve that vital freedom?

JAN 22, 2019

Conor Friedersdorf
Staff writer at *The Atlantic*

SATISH KUMAR SUBRAMANI / REUTERS

Figure 7.1: The Atlantic, 22 January 2019. No image caption (Image source: Reuters)

Figure 7.2: BBC News, 1 October 2019. No image caption. (Image source: Getty Image)

Figure 7.1 comes from *The Atlantic* and focuses on an exaggeratedly negative framing, depicting a dystopian reality where social media has become so uncontrollable that it is leading to the collapse of our worlds. The accompanying image (with its disconcerting affect) reflects the frenzied nature of the headline "Social-media outrage is collapsing our worlds" as it portrays the repeated reflection of a young girl smiling, as if the viewer were looking at her through a kaleidoscope. Figure 7.2 comes from the *BBC News* website and exemplifies the mental health affects around digital media, as more and more young people are "sadfishing" (i.e. sharing their emotional problems online in order to get compassion from other people). What both examples demonstrate is that the movement and circulation of words and images can intensify feelings of fear and anxiety. Therefore, "the power of emotions accumulates through circulation of texts" (Kuntsman, 2012, p.2, see also Ahmed, 2004).

In sum, through the explicit and implicit discourse about affect and emotions in the news media as well as in the audience's response, we see how "moral panic" discourses are constructed. These moral panic discourses are themselves manifestations of wider "affective regimes".

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to make sense of the "affective regimes" concerning digital media as they circulate in and out of digital spaces. I have looked at "the movement of emotions and feelings in and out of cyberspace, through bodies, psyches, texts and machines, but also [at] the multiplicity of effects such movement might entail" (Kuntsman, 2012, p.2). I have shown that these effects are nuanced. Discourses of fear are still prevalent in the news; however, the audience does not simply blindly take them up. When users themselves were given the opportunity to "speak back", they displayed a wide range of responses to the news media's discourse of moral panic and were not always dystopian in outlook. In addition, there is another dimension to the news media's moral panic discourse that must not be ignored: the "disguised" depiction of female users of digital media as happy and positive, which is problematic since it reveals an underlying discursive construction of women and girls as vacuous and vulnerable. While this thesis highlights a certain "agreement" between the news media and the audience, it also demonstrates how people can challenge the status quo and the news media's reductionist representations, something that current research seeks to do by demonstrating the power of the audience in shaping new meanings through the creation of new cultural texts. Although the news media continues to portray digital media and digital media users in unfavorable terms, it is nonetheless crucial to remember that it is through these same digital technologies that change can occur and that another picture can be painted, one which is ideally more forward-looking and positive, one that tells all sides of the story.

NOTES

Preface

[1] For more information about the Sinergia project, see the project website https://whatsup-switzerland.ch/index.php/en/

[2] For more information about Sub-project D, see https://www.crispinthurlow.net/digital-discourse-database.php

[3] See the *Digital Discourse Database* website here: https://www.digitaldiscoursedatabase.org/

Abstract

[4] The *BBC* example was retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/education-49883030
and the *20 Minutes* example was retrieved from https://www.20minutes.fr/sante/2410875-20190108-filles-passent-temps-reseaux-sociaux-plus-sujettes-depression

Chapter 1

[5] I present *critical discourse studies* in more detail later when I outline my methodological framework: Multimodal critical discourse analysis

[6] I present *multimodality* in more detail later when I outline my methodological framework: Multimodal critical discourse analysis

[7] I will discuss the concept of "media ideologies" and its core features in more detail later in my analyses

[8] The concept of *feminism* will be defined and developed in Chapter 5

[9] In the modern era, the concept of *risk* has become synonymous with 'danger' (Fox, 1999)

[10] When I refer to a "text", I refer to a manifestation of a communicative event that can be expressed through words, sounds, visual cues etc. (Bell and Garrett, 1998, p.3)

[11] Although the DDD now includes a total of 1403 articles, at the time of my news media analyses, the DDD included fewer articles (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4).

[12] In my thesis overview (end of Chapter 1), I explain why there is a special focus on 'children' in my thesis.

[13] Find more details about the data collection process in Chapters 5 and 6, which both deal with focus group data

[14] All of the names are pseudonyms

[15] Chapter 2 is closely based on a co-authored publication: Thurlow, C. & Jaroski, V. (2020). 'Emoji invasion': The semiotic ideology of language endangerment in multilingual news discourse. In C. Thurlow, C. Dürscheid & F. Diémoz (Eds), *Visualizing digital discourse: Interactional, institutional and ideological perspectives*. Berlin: de Gruyter

Chapter 2

[16] Since this chapter is closely based on a co-authored publication, I mostly use the pronoun "we", but I sometimes use the pronoun "I"

[17] We treat newspaper headlines as a distinctive sub-genre of news stories (cf. Bell 1991) but also as an especially influential one in terms of the dominant framing work that headlines do (see Ecker et al. 2014).

Chapter 3

[18] Although a gender perspective is beyond the scope of the present chapter (see Chapter 5 for an analysis of the relationship between gender and digital media use), the reference to gender differences in Extract 3.3 represents an essentialist view on gender and technology (see Marwick, 2014, and also Thurlow et al., 2019).

[19] The cover page of the July 1995 issue of the TIME magazine was retrieved from http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19950703,00.html

Chapter 4

[20] In Table 4.1, I added an extra column on the far right which displays further statistics about the gendered distribution of specific types of clothing, facial expressions, and age which are relevant for my analysis. In this column, I only mention relevant statistics for female-only and male-only images, and not for images with both genders.

[21] The images on the left-hand side (i.e. women laughing with salads) were taken for illustrative purposes from the website *The Hairpin* available here:

- https://www.thehairpin.com/2011/01/women-laughing-alone-with-salad/

The three images on the right-hand side come from online newspaper stories (all archived in the DDD) and can be found here:

- https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/can-you-really-lodge-official-11178292
- https://www.welt.de/kmpkt/article162224543/Dein-iPhone-kann-etwas-das-du-nicht-kennst.html
- https://www.welt.de/kmpkt/article168870859/iOS-11-Diese-11-neuen-Features-solltest-du-kennen.html

Chapter 5

[22] In my analysis, I display the participants' biographical details (i.e. age and profession) in parenthesis.

[23] "Patois" refers to the Franco-provençal language and should not be confused with the English connotations of the word "patois". It is the word that people in the canton of Valais use to refer to the "Franco-Provençal" language and carries no negative connotation. In the canton of Valais, different patois dialects are still spoken in some mountain towns, but since most patois speakers also speak French, the use of patois is becoming more and more marginalized. However, there are attempts to keep patois alive. The town of Evolène is currently the last Swiss town where Franco-provençal is still spoken in some families, and children have the opportunity to learn their ancestors' language at school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Sources of quoted newspapers

1. Linguistic extracts

Extract 1.1: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jan/04/depression-in-girls-linked-to-higher-use-of-social-media

Extract 2.1: Le Figaro, France
https://www.lefigaro.fr/langue-francaise/actu-des-mots/2017/07/17/37002-20170717ARTFIG00037-pierre-halte-l-emoji-n-est-pas-un-appauvrissement-du-langage.php

Extract 2.2: The Mirror, UK
https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/redhead-emoji-finally-getting-ginger-9661961

Extract 2.3: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/08/14/using-emojis-makes-people-think-incompetent-research-finds/

Extract 2.4: La Tribune de Genève, Switzerland
https://www.tdg.ch/vivre/societe/Les-emojis-ces-droles-de-petites-betes-virtuelles/story/21829802

Extract 2.5: Le Figaro, France
https://www.lefigaro.fr/langue-francaise/actu-des-mots/2017/08/07/37002-20170807ARTFIG00003-nicolas-loufrani-les-emojis-ont-copie-le-smiley.php

Extract 2.6: Huffington Post, US
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/emoticons-and-emojis-destroying-our-language_b_7950460?guccounter=1

Extract 2.7: Le Figaro, France
https://www.lefigaro.fr/langue-francaise/actu-des-mots/2017/08/07/37002-20170807ARTFIG00003-nicolas-loufrani-les-emojis-ont-copie-le-smiley.php

Extract 2.8: Zeit, Germany
https://www.zeit.de/2017/12/emoji-sprache-zeichen-smileys-uebersetzung

Extract 2.9: La Vanguardia, Spain
https://www.lavanguardia.com/cultura/20161128/412212518843/emojis-lenguaje-universal-estudio-upf.html

Extract 2.10: Le Monde, France
https://www.lemonde.fr/pixels/article/2016/03/15/les-emoji-constituent-ils-un-langage-a-part-entiere_4883318_4408996.html

Extract 2.11: Tagblatt, Switzerland
https://www.tagblatt.ch/panorama/viele-viele-bunte-symbole-ld.936621

Extract 2.12: La Prensa, Honduras
https://www.laprensa.hn/amiga/994972-434/la-fiebre-por-los-emojis-invade-el-mundo-de-la-moda

Extract 2.13: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/jun/25/emoji-invasion-the-end-of-language-as-we-know-it-

Extract 2.14: Le Matin, Switzerland
https://www.lematin.ch/societe/retour-hieroglyphes/story/15235954

Extract 2.15: Tages-Anzeiger, Switzerland
https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/digital/Eine-literarische-Revolution-/story/18666187

Extract 2.16: Infobae, Argentina
https://www.infobae.com/2016/01/13/1782321-abusar-los-emojis-el-nuevo-enemigo-del-lenguaje/

Extract 2.17: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2015/may/27/emoji-language-dragging-us-back-to-the-dark-ages-yellow-smiley-face

Extract 2.18: CNBC, US
https://www.cnbc.com/2015/06/24/emojis-the-death-of-the-written-language.html

Extract 2.19: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/08/08/emoji-are-they-a-force-for-good/

Extract 2.20: The Daily Mail, UK
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5628765/Emoji-ruining-English-language.html

Extract 2.21: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/04/17/emojis-ruining-english-language-young-people-rely-communicate/

Extract 3.1: The Mirror, UK
https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/real-life-stories/mum-home-schools-children-letting-9741165

Extract 3.2: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/parenting/unplugged-parenting-smart-new-way-have-family-digital-detox/

Extract 3.3: Die Zeit, Germany
https://www.zeit.de/2016/42/big-data-informationen-analyse-krankheiten-verkehr-literaturwissenschaft-verbrechen

Extract 3.4: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/26/ban-mobile-phones-in-schools-to-protect-pupils-mental-health

Extract 3.5: Le Monde, France
https://www.unige.ch/fapse/sensori-moteur/files/6414/9880/8865/Medecine_et_enfance_-_ecran.pdf

Extract 3.6: La Tribune de Genève, Switzerland
https://www.tdg.ch/savoirs/sante/ecrans-abiment-enfants/story/10899157

Extract 3.7: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/aug/10/should-let-my-child-play-with-my-smartphone-screen-time

Extract 3.8: AAP Council on Communications and Media
https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/138/5/e20162591.full.pdf

Extract 3.9 : Le Temps, Switzerland
https://www.letemps.ch/societe/abus-decrans-responsabilite-parents

Extract 3.10: Die Welt, Germany
https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article158783239/Die-gefaehrlichen-Nebenwirkungen-der-totalen-Vernetzung.html

2. Visual extracts

Figure 2.1: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/jun/25/emoji-invasion-the-end-of-language-as-we-know-it-

Figure 3.1: Beobachter, Switzerland
https://www.beobachter.ch/familie/erziehung/jugend-meine-jungs-sind-so-passiv

Figure 3.2: Tages-Anzeiger, Switzerland, 21 May 2017
https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/leben/gesellschaft/wie-whiskey-fuer-kleine-kinder/story/16478556

Figure 3.3: Le Monde, France, 28 June 2017
https://www.unige.ch/fapse/sensori-moteur/files/6414/9880/8865/Medecine_et_enfance_-_ecran.pdf

Figure 3.4: Le Matin, Switzerland, 3 July 2017
https://www.lematin.ch/suisse/alerte-ecrans-enfants-bas-ge/story/25027106?track

Figure 3.5: The Guardian, UK, 2 March 2016
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/02/silicon-valley-tech-authorities-children-safety-online

Figure 3.6: The Mirror, UK, 6 October 2016
https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/secret-cyber-life-10-year-8993074

Figure 3.7: The Telegraph, UK, 4 May 2017
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/05/04/tablets-smartphones-damage-toddlers-speech-development/

Figure 4.1: Die Welt, Germany
https://www.welt.de/kmpkt/article169104114/Weisst-du-was-diese-Emojis-wirklich-bedeuten.html

Figure 4.2: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/parenting/screens-teens-survival-tips-parents-technology-battlefield/

Figure 4.3: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/i-cant-be-trusted-with-googles-texting-app/

Figure 4.4: The Mirror, UK
https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/you-unfriend-people-facebook-new-7861180

Figure 4.5: Der Bund, Germany
https://blog.derbund.ch/mamablog/index.php/65710/statt-whatsapp-bitte-wieder-den-telefonalarm/

Figure 4.6: 20 Minuten, Switzerland
https://www.20min.ch/schweiz/news/story/Tablets-und-Twitter---darauf-stehen-Junge-24289113

Figure 4.7: The Washington Post, US
https://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-washington-post/20160326/281784218222693

Figure 4.8: The Mirror, UK
https://www.mirror.co.uk/lifestyle/family/dad-confiscates-iphone-savage-joke-10763694

Figure 4.9: Tages Anzeiger, Switzerland,
https://blog.tagesanzeiger.ch/mamablog/index.php/38886/ist-kindsein-gefaehrlicher-geworden/

Figure 4.10: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/08/22/samsung-launches-bixby-voice-assistant-uk-rival-siri-alexa/

Figure 4.11: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/parenting/should-befriend-children-pals-online/

Figure 4.12: El Pais, Spain
https://elpais.com/tecnologia/2017/05/19/actualidad/1495189858_566160.html

Figure 4.13: Beobachter, Switzerland
https://www.beobachter.ch/digital/multimedia/digitalisierung-sind-wir-allesamt-handy-sklaven

Figure 4.14: Die Zeit, Germany
https://www.zeit.de/zeit-magazin/leben/2016-07/internet-technik-eltern-generation-hilfe

Figure 4.15: The Daily Mail, UK
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3463952/Thou-shalt-not-end-relationship-text-Psychologist-reveals-17-golden-rules-digital-etiquette.html

Figure 4.16: Die Welt, Germany
https://www.welt.de/kmpkt/article162224543/Dein-iPhone-kann-etwas-das-du-nichtkennst.html

Figure 4.17: The Mirror
https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/viva-instagram-photo-sharing-app-8264454

Figure 4.18: LA Times, US
http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-heffernan-iphone-ten-years-20170621-story.html

Figure 4.19: Die Welt, Germany
https://www.welt.de/kmpkt/article168870859/iOS-11-Diese-11-neuen-Features-solltest-du-kennen.html

Figure 4.20: The Telegraph, UK
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/digital-friends-making-lonely-9-things-do-check-facebook/

Figure 4.22: Le Figaro, France
http://madame.lefigaro.fr/bien-etre/finir-ses-textos-par-un-point-fait-de-vous-antipathique-101215-109940

Figure 4.23: The New York Times
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/business/as-elites-switch-to-texting-watchdogs-fear-loss-of-transparency.html

Figure 4.24: The Guardian, UK
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/nov/04/why-do-diplomats-use-this-alien-whatsapp-emoji-for-vladimir-putin

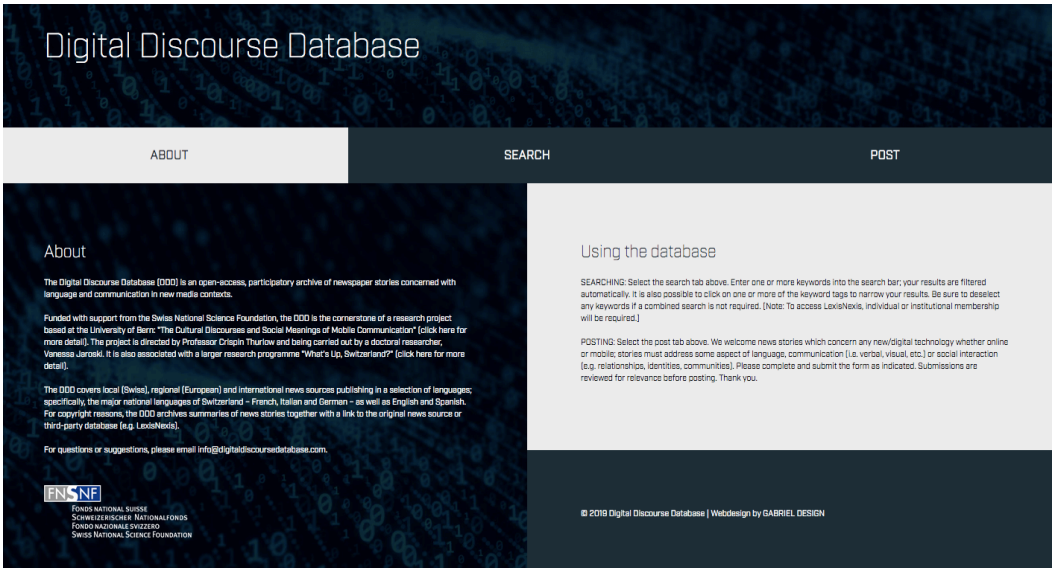
Figure 7.1: The Atlantic, US
https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/01/outrage/579553/

Figure 7.2: BBC News, UK
https://www.bbc.com/news/education-49883030

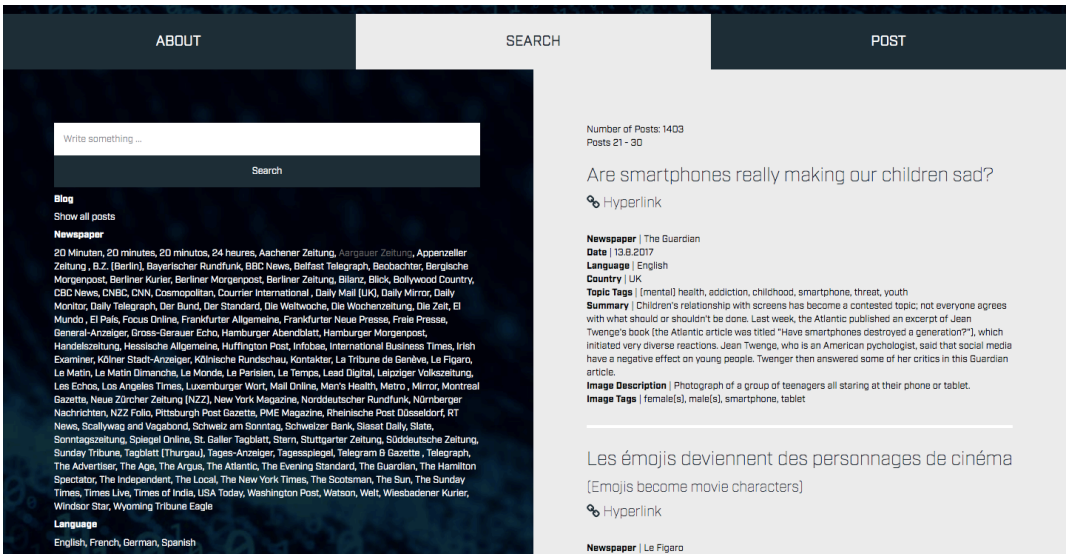
APPENDIX B

The Digital Discourse Database

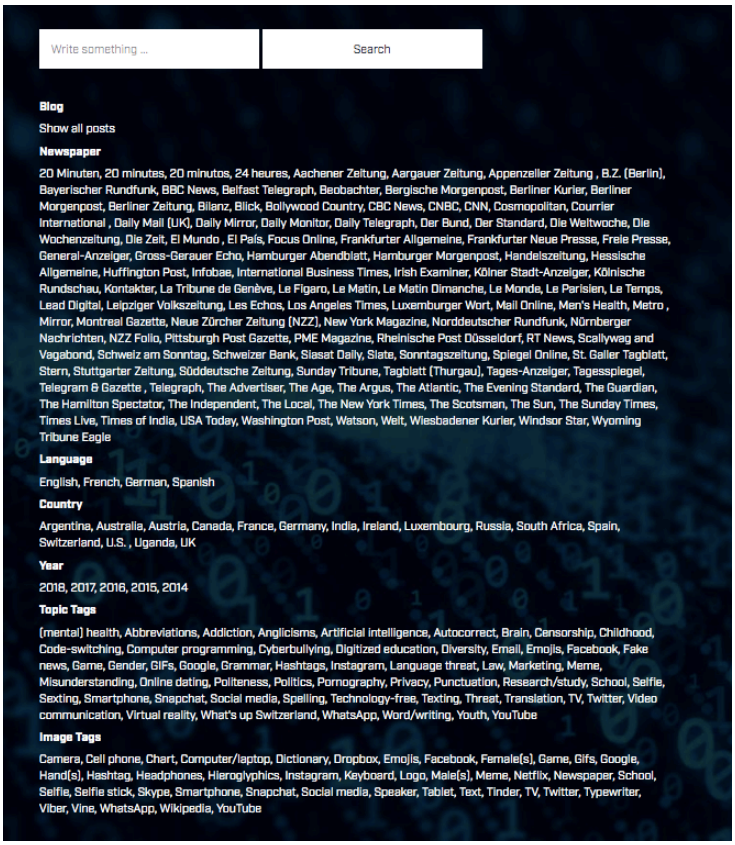
The ABOUT section presents the DDD and its funding



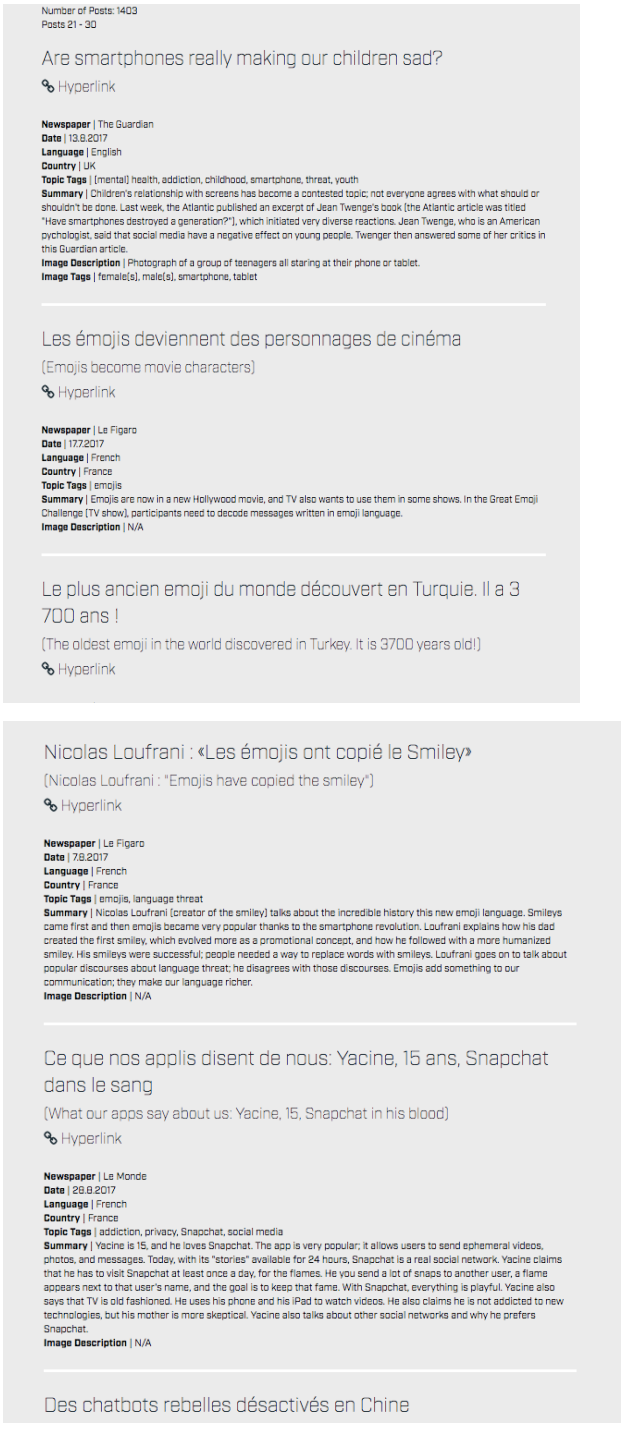
The SEARCH section allows users to search for specific articles



Left-hand side of the SEARCH section: Newspaper name, language, country, year, topic tags, and image tags



Right-hand side of the SEARCH section: List of publications



Number of Posts: 1403
Posts 21 - 30

Are smartphones really making our children sad?

Hyperlink

Newspaper | The Guardian
Date | 13.9.2017
Language | English
Country | UK
Topic Tags | {mental} health, addiction, childhood, smartphone, threat, youth
Summary | Children's relationship with screens has become a contested topic; not everyone agrees with what should or shouldn't be done. Last week, the Atlantic published an excerpt of Jean Twenge's book (the Atlantic article was titled "Have smartphones destroyed a generation?"), which initiated very diverse reactions. Jean Twenge, who is an American pychologist, said that social media have a negative effect on young people. Twenger then answered some of her critics in this Guardian article.
Image Description | Photograph of a group of teenagers all staring at their phone or tablet.
Image Tags | female(s), male(s), smartphone, tablet

Les émojis deviennent des personnages de cinéma

(Emojis become movie characters)

Hyperlink

Newspaper | Le Figaro
Date | 17.7.2017
Language | French
Country | France
Topic Tags | emojis
Summary | Emojis are now in a new Hollywood movie, and TV also wants to use them in some shows. In the Great Emoji Challenge (TV show), participants need to decode messages written in emoji language.
Image Description | N/A

Le plus ancien emoji du monde découvert en Turquie. Il a 3 700 ans !

(The oldest emoji in the world discovered in Turkey. It is 3700 years old!)

Hyperlink

Nicolas Loufrani : «Les émojis ont copié le Smiley»

(Nicolas Loufrani : "Emojis have copied the smiley")

Hyperlink

Newspaper | Le Figaro
Date | 7.6.2017
Language | French
Country | France
Topic Tags | emojis, language threat
Summary | Nicolas Loufrani (creator of the smiley) talks about the incredible history this new emoji language. Smileys came first and then emojis became very popular thanks to the smartphone revolution. Loufrani explains how his dad created the first smiley, which evolved more as a promotional concept, and how he followed with a more humanized smiley. His smileys were successful; people needed a way to replace words with smileys. Loufrani goes on to talk about popular discourses about language threat; he disagrees with those discourses. Emojis add something to our communication; they make our language richer.
Image Description | N/A

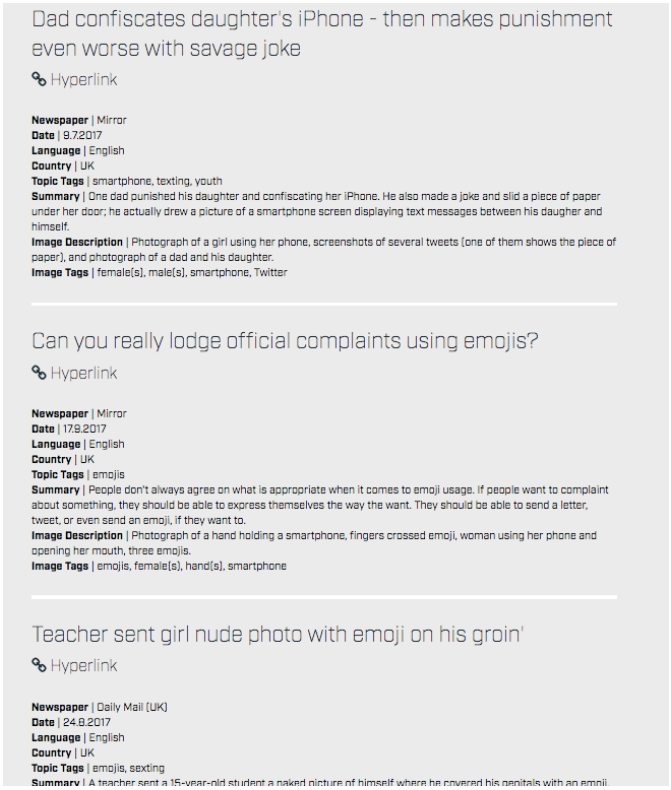
Ce que nos applis disent de nous: Yacine, 15 ans, Snapchat dans le sang

(What our apps say about us: Yacine, 15, Snapchat in his blood)

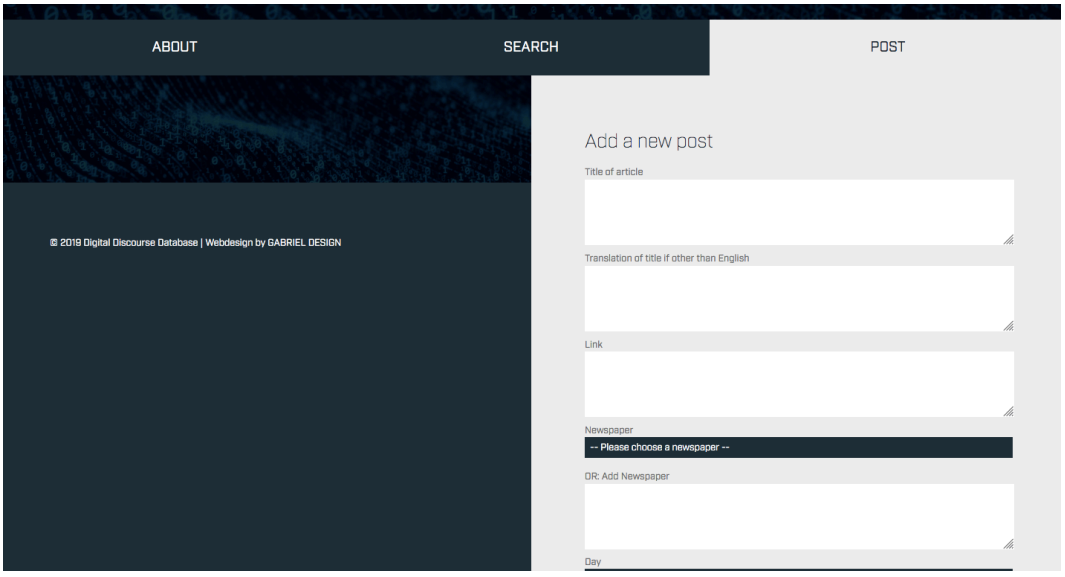
Hyperlink

Newspaper | Le Monde
Date | 28.6.2017
Language | French
Country | France
Topic Tags | addiction, privacy, Snapchat, social media
Summary | Yacine is 15, and he loves Snapchat. The app is very popular; it allows users to send ephemeral videos, photos, and messages. Today, with its "stories" available for 24 hours, Snapchat is a real social network. Yacine claims that he has to visit Snapchat at least once a day, for the flames. He you send a lot of snaps to another user, a flame appears next to that user's name, and the goal is to keep that fame. With Snapchat, everything is playful. Yacine also says that TV is old fashioned. He uses his phone and his iPad to watch videos. He also claims he is not addicted to new technologies, but his mother is more skeptical. Yacine also talks about other social networks and why he prefers Snapchat.
Image Description | N/A

Des chatbots rebelles désactivés en Chine



The POST section allows users to post relevant entries



APPENDIX C

Focus group questionnaire (see Chapters 5 and 6)

Introduction

Tout d'abord, je voudrais vous remercier d'avoir accepté de faire partie de ce groupe de discussion. Comme vous le savez, dans ma thèse j'analyse les discours des médias sur les nouvelles technologies et la communication numérique. Je m'intéresse particulièrement aux images qui accompagnent les articles de journaux et qui représentent des personnes avec des appareils numériques, mais aussi aux commentaires écrits sur les pratiques des gens. Ce groupe de discussion est donc pour moi une manière de découvrir ce que les utilisateurs de nouvelles technologies (vous) pensez à propos de ces représentations dans les medias.

First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to be part of this focus group. As you know, for my PhD project, I'm analyzing news media discourse about digital communication and practices. I'm especially interested in how the press visually portrays people and digital devices, and also how the press writes about people's new media practices. This focus group is a way for me to find out what actual users (you) think about those media representations.

Avant de commencer, je voudrais juste vous dire qu'il n'y a pas de réponse juste ou fausse. Je vais vous guider avec des questions, mais c'est vous qui allez parler. Je vais enregistrer la conversation, mais nous resterez anonymes. Je ne vais identifier personne dans mon rapport. Avez-vous des questions?

Before I start, let me tell you that there is no right or wrong answer. I will be guiding you with questions but you will do the talking. I will be tape recording the conversation but I won't identify anyone by name in my report, so you will remain anonymous. Do you have any questions?

Question 1

Pour commencer sur le thème des nouvelles technologies, pourriez-vous tout d'abord me dire quels appareils vous possédez (par exemple smartphone, tablette) et pour quoi vous les utilisez de manière générale?

As a way of introducing the topic of new technologies and digital communication, can you tell me what digital device(s) you own (e.g. smartphone, tablet) and for what purpose you usually use them?

Question 2

Qu'est-ce que vous pensez des journaux comme l'article ci-dessous qui disent que les gens passent trop de temps sur leur téléphone et que ça peut avoir un impact négatif sur leur santé et leur vie sociale? Quelle est votre opinion par rapport à vos pratiques?

What do you think about news articles such as the one below which claim that people spend too much time on their phone and that this can have a negative impact on their health and social life? What's your opinion on that in relation to your own practices?

Quand l'usage du smartphone risque de virer à l'addiction

● Le succès du smartphone a fait naître certains comportements addictifs.
● La moitié des Français disent regarder leur mobile plus de dix fois par jour.

TÉLÉCOMS

Romain Gueugneau
@romaingueugneau

Accros aux mobiles. Nous le sommes tous plus ou moins. Reste à savoir à quel point, et s'il faut s'en inquiéter. C'est dans cette optique que nous nous sommes rendus à la rencontre de Nicholas Phil Marro (auteur, entre autres, de romans en langage SMS), les « Jeux vidéo sur portable ». Devenues de facto des journées sans smartphone, elles ont lieu du 6 au 8 février.

Le défi savoir paraît difficile à relever, tant les occupants démontrent une place centrale dans nos vies. Selon une étude de Deloitte publiée le mois dernier, trois quarts des Français (âgés de 18 à 75 ans) sont désormais équipés d'un smartphone. Ils s'en servent pour tout : passer des appels, envoyer des SMS et des

Un tiers des 18-24 ans assurent consulter leur portable plus de cinquante fois par jour. Photo Shutterstock

Les Français achètent moins de mobiles, mais plus chers

Avec 20 millions d'unités écoulées en 2016, les ventes de téléphones baissent, mais les revenus progressent grâce à la poussée des modèles haut de gamme.

Pour la première fois l'an dernier, les ventes de téléphones ont baissé dans l'Hexagone (–0 %). 23 millions d'unités ont été écoulées, contre 24,6 millions en 2015, selon les chiffres de l'institut d'études GfK. Sans surprise, la très grande majorité des terminaux achetés (88 %) ont été des smartphones, même s'il a continué de se vendre 2,8 millions de téléphones portables standards.

La principale raison de ce ralentissement est tout simplement la fin du grand cycle d'équipement en smartphones. Aujourd'hui plus de

Comme le fait remarquer Angela Diaz, consultante télécoms chez GfK : « Ce recul [...] est renforcé par la grande distribution, l'essor du reconditionné pour allonger le cycle de vie du produit et venir freiner les ventes de neuf, en particulier sur le dernier quartile de prix. »

Montée en gamme

Malgré ce recul en volume, le marché français du téléphone mobile progresse en valeur. Il a rapporté 3,7 milliards d'euros en 2016 (+ 1 %). Car les consommateurs ont acheté des terminaux en montrant sensiblement plus chers : 380 euros, soit plus de dix euros d'écart avec l'année précédente.

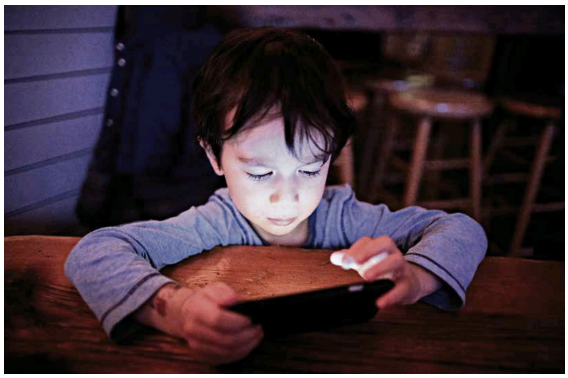
D'une part, les modèles plus grands – et donc plus chers – séduisent

Article Source: Les Echose, France, 8 February 2017

Question 3a

Qu'est ce que vous pensez de ces deux images qui accompagnent deux articles de journaux? Que font ces enfants? Que pensez-vous de ces situations? (E.g. quels effets cela peut avoir sur les enfants? Comment vous savez ça?)

What do you think about these images that accompany two news stories? What do you think these kids are doing?



Article source: Le Temps, Switzerland, 2 Feb. 2018
Image source: Getty Image

Article source: The Telegraph, UK, 10 June 2017
Image source: Per Breiehagen

Question 3b

La première image vient d'un article récent du journal Le Temps (2 février 2018) dont le titre est: **La cyberdépendance abrutit les enfants**, et qui parle de l'addiction aux écrans des petits enfants, ce qui inquiète L'OMS. L'article dit par exemple: «L'utilisation excessive des tablettes, smartphones ou jeux vidéo entraîne des pathologies comme l'obésité, un retard du langage, des troubles du sommeil, des diabètes de type II, une élévation du stress, de l'hyperactivité mais aussi une augmentation des cas de myopie.». Que feriez-vous en tant que parent?

The first image comes from a recent article from Le Temps (2 February 2018). The title is: ***Cyberdependence is making children stupid****. The article talks about children's addiction to screens, which is worrying the WHO. The article states for instance: "The excessive use of tablets, smartphones or video games is leading to pathologies such as obesity, language delay, sleeping problems, type II diabetes, more stress, hyperactivity, but also more cases of nearsightedness". What would you do as a parent?*

Question 4

Est-ce que vous pensez que les hommes et les femmes utilisent les smartphones et autres appareils numériques de la même manière et de la même quantité?

Do you think men and women use smartphones and other digital devices the same way and the same amount?

Question 5

Laissez-moi vous donner quelques statistiques que j'ai trouvé dans mon travail: sur 214 images de personnes avec des smartphones et autres appareils numériques comme tablette ou ordinateur, 53% ne montrent que des femmes et des filles, et 29% que des hommes ou des garçons. Il y a donc beaucoup plus d'images de femmes et filles avec smartphones et autres appareils numériques. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de cette sur-représentation féminine?

Let me give you some statistics from the work I have done so far: out of 214 images of people and smartphones, tablets, and laptops, 53% portray women/girls only, and 29% depict men/boys only. There are thus more images of women and girls with digital devices than men and boys with digital devices. What do you think about this female overrepresentation?

Question 6

Maintenant je vais vous montrer des exemples de ces images que l'on trouve dans les journaux. Regardez de plus près ces images. Que font ces femmes? Comment sont-elles représentées?

Now I will show you some examples of news media images. Look closely at these images. What are these women doing? How are they represented?

Article source: The Daily Mail, UK, 25 February 2016
Image source: Corbis

Article source: Die Welt, Germany, 30 September 2017
Image source: Getty Image

Article source: Die Welt, Germany, 23 February 2017
Image source: Getty Image

Article source: The Guardian, UK, 29 May 2016
Image source: Alamy

Question 7

Et ces hommes, que font-ils? Comment sont-ils représentés?

And these men, what are they doing? How are they represented?

Article source: The Telegraph, UK, 2 March 2017
Image source: Alamy

Article source: Die Zeit, Germany, 21 July 2016
Image source: N/A

Article source: LA Times, US, 21 June 2017
Image source: Associated Press

Article source: The New York Times, US 6 July 2017
Image source: European Press Photo Agency

Question 8

Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de la place des femmes dans le monde des nouvelles technologies?

What do think about the place of women in the field/world of new technologies?

Question 9

On a terminé les questions. Voulez-vous rajouter quelque chose par rapport aux nouvelles technologies et les pratiques des femmes, des hommes, des jeunes, des enfants?

We're done with questions. Would you like to add anything else about new communication technologies and people's (women, men, young people, kids) practices?

APPENDIX D

Sources of the news articles that specifically discuss the relationship between language and emojis (see Chapter 2)

The Guardian (UK), The Mirror (UK), BBC (UK), Daily Mail (UK), The Telegraph (UK), The Independent (UK)

The New York Times (US), The Los Angeles Times (US), The Washington Post (US), USA Today (US), CNBC (US), The Huffington Post (US)

The Times of India (India)

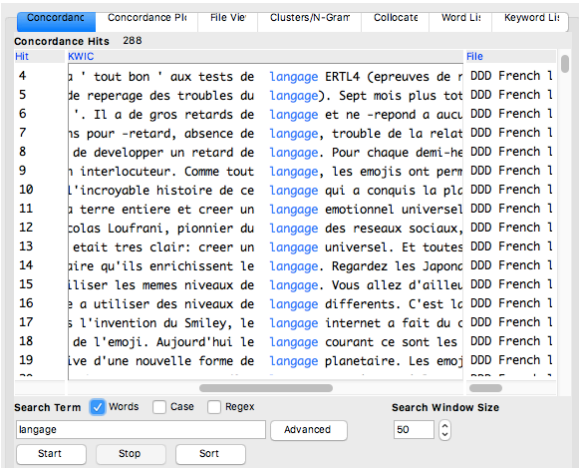
CBC (Canada)

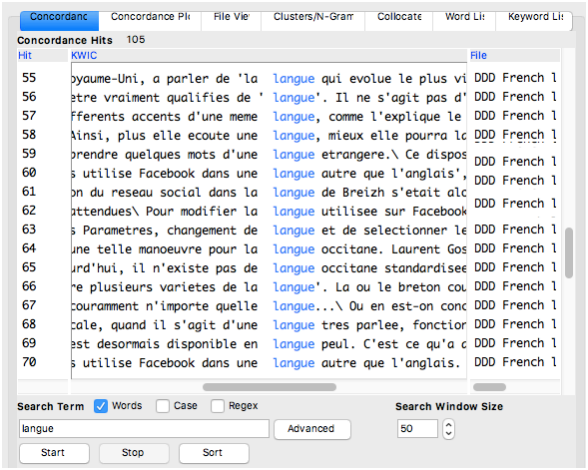
Le Figaro (France), Le Monde (France), Courrier International (France)

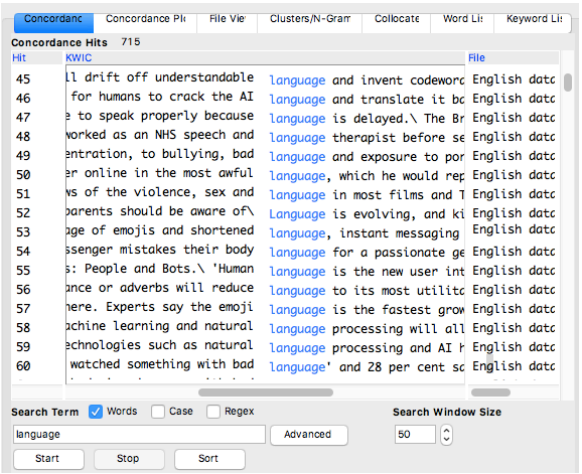
La Tribune de Genève (Switzerland), Le Matin (Switzerland)

APPENDIX E

Antconc concordance of French words ‘langage’ and ‘langue’, and English word ‘language (see Chapter 2)







APPENDIX F

The most common nouns in the French-language and English-language datasets through Antconc (see Chapter 3)

French nouns

1. monde (world)	11. téléphone (telephone)	21. entreprise (company)
2. enfants (children)	12. jour (day)	22. communication
3. intelligence (intelligence)	13. internet	23. application (app)
4. temps (time)	14. vie (life)	24. compte (account)
5. google	15. mots (words)	25. données (data)
6. écrans (screens)	16. fois (times)	26. ligne (line)
7. réseaux (networks/media)	17. années (years)	27. messages
8. parents (parents)	18. écran (screen)	28. twitter
9. exemple (example)	19. utilisateurs (users)	29. réseau (network)
10. enfant (child)	20. point (point)	30. étude (study)

English nouns

1. people	11. company	21. friends
2. time	12. technology	22. face
3. media	13. children	23. parents
4. year	14. apple	24. life
5. users	15. phone	25. school
6. app	16. internet	26. content
7. twitter	17. day	27. messages
8. way	18. news	28. things
9. world	19. work	29. women
10. google	20. years	30. apps

APPENDIX G

Sources of the news articles that specifically discuss children's digital media practices (see Chapter 3)

The Guardian (UK), The Daily Mail (UK), The Telegraph (UK), The Sun (UK), The Mirror (UK), The Independent (UK), The Argus (UK), The Irish Examiner (Ireland)

The Huffington Post (US), The New York Times (US)

The Scotsman (Scotland)

Essential Kids (Australia)

Le Monde (France), Le Figaro (France), Les Echos (France)

La Tribune de Genève (Switzerland), Le Matin (Switzerland), Le Temps (Switzerland), 24 heures (Switzerland)
Der Bund (Switzerland), 20 Minuten (Switzerland), Beobachter (Switzerland), Tages Anzeiger (Switzerland), Appenzeller Zeitung (Switzerland), Handelszeitung (Switzerland), St. Galler Tagblatt (Switzerland), Die Weltwoche (Switzerland), Die Wochenzeitung (Switzerland)

Die Welt (Germany), Die Zeit (Germany), Kontakter (Germany), Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany), Norddeutscher Rundfunk (Germany), Berliner Zeitung (Germany), Die Hessische Allgemeine (Germany), Bergische Morgenpost (Germany)

APPENDIX H

Montage of news media images portraying young children with digital media (see Chapter 3)

These news media images come from 24 different news stories from: The Telegraph (UK), The Mirror (UK), The Guardian (UK), Daily Mail (UK), The New York Times (US), Die Zeit (Germany), Tages Anzeiger (Switzerland), Beobachter (Switzerland), NZZ (Switzerland), Le Matin (Switzerland), Le Temps (Switzerland), Le Monde (France)

APPENDIX I

Transcription conventions based on the Jefferson transcription system (see Chapters 5 and 6)

[word]	overlapping talk
[word	simultaneous talk
=	end of a sequence of line and beginning of another sequence of line without
any	pause
(.)	very brief pause
(0.5)	time between words in seconds
( )	uncertain or inaudible word
↑	rise in intonation
↓	drop in intonation
(( ))	analyst's comments in the parentheses
CAPITAL	louder words
° word	indicates that a specific word is softer than the rest of the talk
?	indicates a rising tone which may indicate a question